Order in a World of Chaos: A Comparative Study of a Central Dialectic in Works of Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka and Luis Cernuda.

by

Neil Charles McKinlay

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Glasgow, Departments of German and Hispanic Studies

August, 1996

© Neil Charles McKinlay, 1996.

Abstract

This thesis is a comparative study of three overtly unrelated authors, Thomas Mann, Kafka and Cernuda, setting them in a European context of a 'crisis of faith' where doubt in the existence of an ordered universe ultimately governed by God is becoming widespread. Rather than a philosophical or theological study, however, this thesis concentrates on the way that this loss of faith finds its expression in literature. After a brief introduction, setting the context, the focus is first of all on the way that faith in God (or some kind of Absolute) and order generally becomes lost, and the consequences of that loss in individual lives.

Not surprisingly, this loss of order is grounds for despair, but what then manifests itself is a desire to find order once again. It is this desire for order which then provides the focus for the whole of the rest of the thesis. There is a desire both for absolute order and for order in the material world. Chapter two concentrates on the quest for absolute order, which would give genuine ontological security and a sense that there is ultimate meaning and purpose in the cosmos. This quest does however fail, but there are other quests for order, in both 'love' and erotic impulses and in art. The problems however continue, for 'love' is dominated by a sexuality which causes more chaos than it does order, and at its best is only transient. Similarly, art, while at times positive, at least temporarily, can divorce the artist from life and can bring him into contact with a darker, more 'chaotic' side of existence. There is also the desire to write literary works themselves, but this has problems of its own: the fluid nature of meaning and the fate of literature once it has left the control of the writer.

The comparative approach to these three authors is very illuminating. It demonstrates the complexity of Cernuda's poetry, which reflects ideas in both Mann's and Kafka's writing, holding together many tensions and apparently conflicting themes. It also demonstrates that Mann and Kafka need not be held as far apart as conventional criticism has tended to do. Above all it demonstrates the constant dialectic of order and chaos in the modern world.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been brought to completion without the support and assistance of a number of people. First and foremost I should like to thank my two supervisors, Professor D. Gareth Walters and Mr. Bernard Ashbrook, and their colleague, Professor Roger H. Stephenson, and former colleague, Professor Nicholas G. Round. Anything of value in this thesis is assuredly grounded in their influence and direction over the many years I have spent as an undergraduate and postgraduate at Glasgow University.

In addition to this esteemed quartet, I should like to thank my various 'fellow-sufferers', especially: Shona Allan, Elizabeth Cantlie, Martin McQuillan, Mary Reilly, Janet Stewart and Patricia Zecevic. I shall always remember those interminable discussions in the 'vulgar chamber'!

Perhaps my greatest debt of gratitude is however due to my parents, who have endured four years of bad moods, frustration, despair and expenditure with patience and fortitude.

Introduction

The trend towards secularisation and a non-theistic world-view has characterised Western thinking in the last two centuries[1]. Scientific research, especially since Darwin's landmark work *The Origin of the Species*, has been dominated by a materialist way of thinking, and its relative objectivity has been instrumental in countering the claims of the religious that the universe was created by and is still in the control of Almighty God. This trend away from theism has been mirrored in both philosophical and literary expression and, within the European context, it can be seen to be present in a variety of cultures, including the German and Spanish-speaking worlds. Is this an ordered world, or is it chaotic?

There is not the space for a detailed account of philosophical ideas, but it may suffice to mention some key figures. One of the most famous philosophers of the nineteenth century is Arthur Schopenhauer, whose pessimism had a profound influence on German philosophy. Schopenhauer speaks, in his major treatise *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, of life as a 'ganze Tragikomödie'[2], and Janaway succinctly sums up Schopenhauer's ideas by saying that, 'The old ideas of the immortal soul, the divine purpose, and the dignity of man have died ... and should not be revived'[3]. It is perhaps this attitude of the ultimate purposelessness of the world that is seized upon most vigorously by one of Schopenhauer's successors, Friedrich Nietzsche, of whose work there appears to have been a new and different interpretation with every generation[4]. The major reason for this is that Nietzsche frequently cannot be taken literally: his complex and even self-contradictory style makes interpretation notoriously difficult. Nietzsche will be remembered for his declaration of the 'death of God'[5] and for his preaching of the

---

[1]It should be stressed that this thesis is not intended as a philosophical or theological discussion. Furthermore, evaluation of the alleged 'rightness' or otherwise of such standpoints is not deemed to be of relevance.

[2]Arthur Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, Band II*, Vol. II of *Sämtliche Werke* (Wiesbaden: Eberhard Brockhaus, 1949), p. 407.

[3]Christopher Janaway, *Schopenhauer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 100.

[4]For an overview of this, see Peter Pütz, *Friedrich Nietzsche* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1967), pp. 6-16.

[5]For example, in *Also sprach Zarathustra*:

> 'Und jüngst hörte ich ihn dies Wort sagen: »Gott ist tot; an seinem Mitleiden mit den Menschen ist Gott gestorben.«'

(Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in drei Bänden*, ed. Karl Schlechta (München: Carl Hanser, 1954-6), II, p. 348.)

'Übermensch' who 'overcomes'[6] Europe's stagnant society. We might also mention here Søren Kierkegaard, considered the 'father' of modern Existentialist philosophy, who occupies a very different position from Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, because he was a Christian believer. One of his 'psychological' works, *The Concept of Anxiety*, is of some importance, for, in its German translation (*Angst*), this concept has become a commonplace in European thought[7]. Kierkegaard's analysis of 'anxiety' (and also of 'despair' in *The Sickness unto Death*[8]) points forward to commonplaces of twentieth century literature, and *Angst* in particular will be seen in both Kafka's and Cernuda's writing.

These ideas about life and the order of the universe are current also in literature. The sense of a world divorced from an Absolute rapidly becomes a commonplace in Romanticism[9]: in the German context for example, Heinrich von Kleist laments that 'das Paradies ist verriegelt'[10]. The poetry of Friedrich Hölderlin frequently gives expression to his being caught between two opposing poles: religious faith and doubt[11]. Heinrich Heine

---

See also *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, section 125, where we read 'Gott ist tot! Gott bleibt tot!' (*Werke*, II, p. 127). Note: Translations of literary quotations have been included in an appendix, beginning p. 311.

[6]Again in *Also sprach Zarathustra*, we read:

> '*Ich lehre euch den Übermenschen*. Der Mensch ist etwas, das überwunden werden soll.'

(*Werke*, II, p. 279.)

[7]Kierkegaard defines 'anxiety' as:

> 'the dizziness of freedom, which emerges when the spirit wants to posit the synthesis and freedom looks down into its own possibility, laying hold of finiteness to support itself.'

(Søren Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard's Writings*, ed. and trans. H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), VIII, p. 61.) See also Patrick Gardiner, *Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 108-9, and Alastair Hannay, *Kierkegaard* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 164-5.

[8]As Hannay comments (p. 34), 'The sickness of *despair* ... is not to face death in the expectation of eternal life'.

[9]The classification 'Romantic' is a particularly imprecise one in German literary history, since it can be used to refer to writing of hugely different styles and themes, even including some of the work of Goethe and Schiller, who have little place in the present discussion. The term is therefore more one of convenience and common practice than of semantic accuracy.

[10]Heinrich von Kleist, 'Über das Marionettentheater', in *Werke in einem Band*, ed. Helmut Sembdner (München: Carl Hanser, 1966), p. 804.

[11]The 'mystery of divine love' (L. S. Salzberger, *Hölderlin* (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1952), p. 41) is explored for example in 'Patmos' (Friedrich Hölderlin, *Selected Verse*, ed. and trans. Michael Hamburger (London: Anvil Press Poetry, 1986), pp. 193-203), while the sense of humanity as distanced from an unattainable Absolute is clear in 'Brot und Wein':

on the other hand is rather more pessimistic, claiming in poem XXXIX of the 'Die Heimkehr' section of the *Buch der Lieder*, that 'Gestorben ist der Herrgott oben'[12].

Within the Spanish literary context, it is not surprising to find a parallel process. The hold of religion has however been rather stronger in Spain than in northern Europe, and thus the Romantic literature of Spain is perhaps rather slower to abandon a theocentric world-view. Rosalía de Castro, for example, gives voice to despair, doubt and faith[13]. Similarly, the writings of the earlier Duque de Rivas express a comparable degree of despair, and a greater degree of doubt than Rosalía's poetry. In the play *Don Álvaro o la fuerza del sino*, for example, Don Álvaro speaks in Act III, Scene iii, of 'el cielo' 'con su ceño furibundo'[14], suggesting a God who is distant and disinterested in humanity. Much more radical, although still never abandoning theology, is the later writer Miguel de Unamuno, who, devastated by the tragic death of his son in 1904, was terrified of dying himself. A recurrent theme of his writing is the desperate desire for ontological security which ultimately could only be found in a Christianity he was unable unquestioningly to accept[15].

'Aber Freund! wir kommen zu spät. Zwar leben die Götter,
Aber über dem Haupt droben in anderer Welt.'

(*Selected Verse*, p. 111.)

[12]Heinrich Heine, *Buch der Lieder* (München: Goldmann, 1987), p. 134.

[13]Evidence of this tension can be seen in for example poem 109 of *En las orillas del Sar*:

'Y alzando al cielo la mirada ansiosa
busco a tu Padre en el espacio inmenso,
como el piloto en la tormenta busca
la luz del faro que le guíe al puerto.'

(Rosalía de Castro, *En las orillas del Sar*, ed. Marina Mayoral, 3rd ed. (Madrid: Castalia, 1989), p. 172.)

[14]Duque de Rivas, *Don Álvaro o la fuerza del sino*, ed. Donald L. Shaw (Madrid: Castalia, 1986), pp. 116-7. See also Richard A. Cardwell, '*Don Álvaro* or the Force of Cosmic Injustice', *Studies in Romanticism*, 12 (1973), especially 562. Similar ideas are also expressed in Rivas' poem *El solemne desengaño*, where the protagonist, the Marquis' of Lombay, prays for the sick Empress, but then hears 'como el No con que respuesta/da a su plegaria el Eterno' (Rivas, *El solemne desengaño*, in *Romances*, 8th ed. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1976), p. 210). (See also D. Gareth Walters, 'The Saint as Romantic Hero: An Interpretation of Rivas' *El solemne desengaño*', in *A Face not Turned to the Wall: Essays on Hispanic Themes for Gareth Alban Davies*, ed. C. A. Longhurst (Leeds: University of Leeds Department of Spanish and Portuguese, 1987), pp. 148-9).

[15]This desperate desire for ontological security is evident in for example *Niebla*, where protagonist Augusto Pérez suffers from a Kierkegaardian 'ansia de inmortalidad'. (Miguel de Unamuno, *Niebla*, 18th ed. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1980), p. 154.)

This is no more than the briefest overview of the general trend towards the abandonment of faith in an ordered universe, and the examples chosen will inevitably appear somewhat arbitrary. More important is the fact that it is into this context of doubt which the writings of the three authors upon which this thesis will concentrate, namely Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka and Luis Cernuda, may be placed. A few words to justify the choice of these writers should be included. No question of influence whatsoever will be studied. (There is no evidence that Cernuda read either Mann or Kafka or that they even had access to Cernuda's work[16].) In addition, the three are separated by differences of culture, language and even of genre, together with the fact that they tended to write from a personal standpoint[17]. This study will however demonstrate the at times quite surprising degree to which they share a common ground of concerns, especially in terms of an order/chaos dialectic where both themes are continually present and in tension, and that consequently, by comparison with each other, their stature as representative European writers will become more evident[18].

---

[16]Kafka could not have read Cernuda's poetry, since he died when Cernuda was only at the outset of his literary career. While Mann was certainly still alive for much of Cernuda's career, it would be irrelevant, since it is the early work (up to and including *Der Tod in Venedig*) which will be the primary focus of this study.

To the best of my knowledge there has been no comparative study of Mann and Cernuda. There are two very brief mentions of Kafka in comparison with Cernuda: the first by Susana Frentzel Beyme, who mentions 'los ámbitos pétreos creados por Kafka, ese mundo sin paisajes, sin aire', which has obvious similarities with the Surrealist-influenced poetry ('La función del cuerpo en la cosmovisión poética de Luis Cernuda', *Cuadernos del Sur*, 10 (1969), 100). The second is by Julia Uceda, who mentions that the 'clima cargado de la casa' in the poem 'La familia' 'nos recuerda al Franz Kafka de *Carta al padre* ('La patria más profunda', *Ínsula*, Año 19, No. 207 (1964), 8). In discussing *Égloga, Elegía, Oda*, Manuel Ballestero actually contrasts Cernuda's poetry with the European trend, where 'suena la voz de Kafka' ('Cernuda, errante en la finitud', in *Sondas de hermeneútica y de poética* (Madrid: Hiperión, 1981), p. 120). While Cernuda's earliest poetry has less in common with Kafka and other European trends, it will be seen that such a judgement (although presumably only a casual comment) does considerable violence to *La realidad y el deseo* as a whole.

[17]Thomas Mann in his later work tended to gravitate towards more overtly general issues, but again this is of marginal interest. Cernuda's poetry can be read as the creation of a 'mito personal' (see for example Luis Maristany, *La realidad y el deseo. Luis Cernuda* (Barcelona: Laia, 1982), p. 33, or César Real Ramos, 'La raíz de *la diferencia* de Luis Cernuda: La visión mítica de la realidad', *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 15 (1990), 117), but it is restrictive *only* to do so.

[18]Mann and Kafka already enjoy reputations as major European writers of this century. This net can however be widened to include the Spanish literary context, which is usually neglected where German writers are concerned. By the same token, while it has been acknowledged that Cernuda is probably the most

Before continuing, it is advisable to mention the methodology of reading which has been employed. While literary theory has become fashionable and can provide illuminating insights, there is no adherence in this thesis to any single theory. Account has been taken of a range of theoreticians, as diverse as M. H. Abrams, Wolfgang Iser, Jacques Derrida, Harold Bloom (amongst others), but from a critical standpoint unwilling to adopt any of them slavishly or for their own sake. Certainly it would be foolish to ignore the way in which Post-Structuralist criticism in particular has changed forever the way we read, and the problematic and even arbitrary nature of language and meaning has been recognised as an integral and hindering part of interpretation. Any author writes in a manner at least in part dictated by his or her own culture and background, the exact parameters of which must ultimately remain unknown to the reader. Similarly, every reader is a product of his or her own culture and background, and this will in turn affect the way in which he or she responds to a literary text. A definitive reading therefore does not exist. It is however too extreme to suggest, as Bloom does, that reading 'is always a misreading'[19]. Certainty and security of meaning cannot be guaranteed, but there is at least a large degree of semantic common ground. After all, if there were none, this thesis would be a nonsense, for it could only be misread, and any act of reading would logically be pointless. While there is a range of signification, affected both by the author's and the reader's own culture and experiences of language, that range is, in my opinion, finite, not infinite.

We may now focus on the writings of Mann, Kafka and Cernuda, beginning with the way in which the crisis of faith finds its expression. This will then lead us to an analysis of the search for order which manifests itself, for it will be seen that the chaos of the modern world will be too great to bear: absolute order is sought, and also order in the

---

'European' poet of his generation (Carlos Otero mentions this in his article 'Poeta de Europa' in *Luis Cernuda*, ed. Derek Harris (Madrid: Taurus, 1977), pp. 129-37, as does Reginald Gibbons in his introduction to Luis Cernuda, *Selected Poems of Luis Cernuda*, ed. and trans. Reginald Gibbons (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 4), there has been little exploration of the topic.

[19]Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 3. Bloom is discussing in the first place the creative process, but the principle would appear to apply for all acts of reading.

material world, in the realms of 'love' and the erotic and in art. As far as Mann is concerned, the principal focus will be on his early work, especially *Buddenbrooks* and *Der Tod in Venedig*; for Kafka the major concern will be *Das Schloß*, although there will be references also to *Der Prozeß* and various short stories, as well as his aphorisms, diaries and letters; within Cernuda's *œuvre*, *La realidad y el deseo,* which forms by far the majority of his creative output, will be of relevance more or less in its entirety.

Chapter One

Order into Chaos: The Loss of the Absolute

Thomas Mann

The Existential-Metaphysical Significance of Mann's Writing

Within this chapter Mann's first novel *Buddenbrooks* will be the principal focus within his *œuvre*. There is a difference between the writing of Mann on the one hand and Kafka and Cernuda on the other. *Buddenbrooks* is a complex novel, which has a thematic framework encompassing a variety of 'spheres' of concern, including the social, metaphysical or existential, interpersonal and aesthetic. The decline from order into chaos takes place, to a greater or lesser extent, in *all* of these spheres, although the emphasis is on the first two. As far as Kafka and Cernuda are concerned, the aesthetic sphere has little part to play in this process of decline, and as for the social sphere, it is of little importance whatsoever for Cernuda, and debatable as an aspect of Kafka's writing. Furthermore, Mann, who occupies perhaps an ambiguous position between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, dwells more on the problem of 'Verfall' itself, whereas, for Kafka and Cernuda, this has largely taken place already. Returning to *Buddenbrooks*, regarding the four spheres of the social, existential, interpersonal and aesthetic, a first glance at the novel could suggest that it is the social sphere which predominates. This impression is given by the title *Buddenbrooks* (the protagonists' surname) and the subtitle, 'Verfall einer Familie', both of which foreground a social unit[1]. This is an oversimplification. It would also be an oversimplification to assume that it is essentially a social novel which happens to contain other elements, because this concentrates on the 'Familie' of the subtitle and pays insufficient attention to the concept of 'Verfall', wherein lies the real core of the book.

Before discussing the question of 'Verfall' itself, it is necessary to be clear to what extent the existential or metaphysical sphere is of fundamental significance within the novel. The various spheres are all interconnected. This is illustrated by the fact that

---

[1]Martin Swales emphasises this side of the novel (although not disregarding the others) in his book *'Buddenbrooks': Family Life as the Mirror of Social Change* (Boston: Twayne, 1991). See also Erich Heller, *Thomas Mann: The Ironic German*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 38.

they are all cornerstones of this process of 'Verfall'. The social and metaphysical spheres are however possibly the two which dominate the novel. From the simple statement '»Bete und arbeite«' made by Konsul Johann Buddenbrook (also called Jean) in the opening chapter[2], clearly an expression of the Protestant work ethic, a process can be seen whereby two of those four spheres, namely the social ('arbeiten') and the existential ('beten') become brought together into a single unit[3]. (The interpersonal sphere, incidentally, is not woven into the fabric of the book in quite such a profound way, while the aesthetic sphere does not really make its entrance until much later[4].) The following example from part III, chapter 13, when Tony is reading the 'Familienpapiere', just before she enters her engagement to Bendix Grünlich, marks an important stage in this process:

> 'Alles war ... mit einer fast religiösen Achtung vor Tatsachen überhaupt verzeichnet: Denn war nicht der geringsten Eine Gottes Wille und Werk, der die Geschicke der Familie wunderbar gelenkt?'[5]

The 'Familienpapiere' themselves assume an important rôle, because everything of significance that happens in the Buddenbrook family is contained therein, documenting all the various stages in the decline of the dynasty. What is of greater importance here is the specifically Christian aspect, i.e., the 'Gottes Wille und Werk'. The sense of Christian tradition is very important for the Buddenbrooks; the motto above the door ('Dominus

---

[2]Thomas Mann, *Buddenbrooks: Verfall einer Familie*, in *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelbänden*, ed. Peter de Mendelssohn, Frankfurter Ausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1980-1986), p. 13. All subsequent references will be to this edition. For convenience, only the title (abbreviated where appropriate) of the relevant volume will subsequently be given.

[3]Obviously the Buddenbrook love of money is also an important part of the social sphere. (A good example is the way that Grünlich impresses by his confident presentation of his rather shaky financial circumstances.) It may perhaps be to overstate the case to say that 'the acquisition and preservation of money is for the Buddenbrooks the ultimate purpose of existence.' (R. J. Hollingdale, *Thomas Mann: A Critical Study* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1971), p. 26.)

[4]Fritz Kaufmann's summing-up of the novel is extremely simplistic:

> 'What takes place here, under the guise of telling a story about a Lübeck family, is a bringing forth ... of the conditions of the artist's existence.'

(*Thomas Mann: The World as Will and Representation* (New York: Cooper Square, 1973), p. 89.)

[5]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 161.

providebit') is in itself evidence of this[6]. That there is more to this thought of Tony's than a sense of Christian tradition is evidenced by the verb 'lenken', which indicates a conviction that the family's existence in this social world is tied closely to a notion of the fulfilment of divine purpose. It expresses the family's vision that what happens is not purely material, but invested with a significance that extends beyond the earthly sphere.

The existential significance comes much more to the fore as Thomas Buddenbrook grows into adulthood. Thomas is the protagonist of the novel, evidenced by the fact that both his father and grandfather are dead by the end of part IV, barely a third of the way through the book. It is not until the end of part X that Thomas dies, even although he is far from an old man. It is also in the portrayal of Thomas that the most profound metaphysical questions are concentrated. The process of bringing together the social and existential spheres culminates within the character of Thomas, and in particular in the following sentence from part VIII, by which time he has lost his youthful enthusiasm for business:

> 'Das Leben war hart, und das Geschäftsleben war in seinem rücksichtslosen und unsentimentalen Verlaufe *ein Abbild des großen und ganzen Lebens.*' [My emphasis.][7]

Given Thomas' existential preoccupations, 'das große und ganze Leben' must refer to more than merely social or family life but to the nature of existence in more general terms. What is of fundamental importance here is that he takes this attitude. These two different aspects of existence have become moulded into one, both for Thomas, and, by implication, for the novel as a whole. Thus while the novel focusses on a specific family and its decline from prosperity, its concerns are much more profound, explicitly paralleling that 'crisis of faith' which was a preoccupation in the intellectual life of nineteenth century Europe.

---

[6]It is highly ironic that the same motto hung above the door when the house belonged to the Ratenkamp family, for whom the Lord ultimately did *not* provide the material benefit to which this motto obviously refers.

[7]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 478.

The Age of Order

Before the loss of faith and order may be analysed, it is necessary to be aware of precisely what it is that is being lost. This is demonstrated by the first two generations of Buddenbrooks in the novel, namely that of Thomas' father and grandfather, especially his grandfather. It is in the time of these generations that the Buddenbrook family was gaining in importance, but what was the order which these generations exemplified? To what extent is faith in the Absolute a cornerstone of their thinking?

The degree to which an ordered world-view predominates in the life of the eldest Buddenbrook is called into doubt in the opening scene, where he asks Tony to recite the catechism. While the desire for such a recitation might appear to be the behaviour of a pious believer, there are conflicting ideas in this scene. The fact that an eight-year-old girl is expected to know the catechism is in itself an indication of the rôle which the church must play in the lives of these people, and it is in the light of this that the following apparent contradiction should be considered:

> '»Dazu Kleider und Schuhe«, sprach [Antonie], »Essen und Trinken, Haus und Hof, Weib und Kind, Acker und Vieh...« Bei diesen Worten aber brach der alte Monsieur Johann Buddenbrook einfach in Gelächter aus, ... Er lachte vor Vergnügen, sich über den Katechismus mokieren zu können, und hatte wahrscheinlich nur zu diesem Zwecke das kleine Examen vorgenommen.'[8]

At first sight this is condemnatory of the catechism, and by implication of Christianity also. If Johann's sole interest in the catechism is 'mokieren', then he must be materialistic and have no real concern for the church. But this is an indication neither of his belonging to an age of order nor of a loss of order resulting in chaos, but rather a complacent materialism. It could be argued that every age has its sceptics and doubters, but this clearly challenges the theory that the novel entirely reflects the preoccupations of an age. While it would be wrong to claim that Johann's mockery is purely innocent and playful (there is never any evidence of religious fervour on his part), nevertheless labels

---

[8]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, pp. 7-8.

such as 'materialist', 'atheist' or 'agnostic' would be an exaggeration. First, even the most devout must concede that the listing by an eight-year-old of 'Weib und Kind, Acker und Vieh' does have its comical side, and it is that which is the object of the old man's laughter. Second, it is the catechism, not the 'Apostle's Creed' or a Scripture text which is being mocked, and thus hardly amounts to an outright attack on Christianity[9]. Third, the phrase 'nur zu diesem Zwecke' in the above quotation is qualified, crucially, by 'wahrscheinlich'. In other words, we are *not* told categorically that Johann's only intention is derision. Thus while 'complacent' may not be inappropriate, he has not necessarily abandoned a theocentric world-view.

The faith of the oldest generation may not be fervent, but the sense of order is nevertheless certainly apparent. This order is most obvious from the point of view of society rather than from a religious standpoint, although this is not exclusively the case. Johann Buddenbrook Senior has a passion for order and structure which clearly looks back towards the eighteenth century when he was born. This is illustrated in the fifth chapter of part I, during the 'house-warming' festivities, when the discussion turns to an unkempt garden which the family possesses in the town:

> '»Ja, meiner Treu!« sagte der Alte. »Ich ärgere mich noch immer, daß ich mich seinerzeit nicht resolvieren konnte, ihn ein bißchen menschlich herrichten zu lassen! ... Welch nett Besitztum, wenn das Gras gepflegt, die Bäume hübsch kegel- und würfelförmig beschnitten wären...«'[10]

Johann's attitude towards garden design is reminiscent of the formal French gardens of the eighteenth century, with their austere, geometric order. While we learn relatively little about Johann in the novel, nevertheless we have the impression that this attitude would dominate his way of thinking (and, indeed, that of his contemporaries), where order is

---

[9]Herbert Lehnert makes the additional valid point that the first part of the catechism (the confession of faith) is omitted and therefore is not made an object of scorn. (*Thomas Mann: Fiktion, Mythos, Religion* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1965), p. 77.) Elke Emrich too speaks of Johann Buddenbrook's essentially 'bibelfeste Religiosität'. ('Zum metaphysischen Bedürfnis in Thomas Manns *Buddenbrooks* und Heinrich Manns *Im Schlaraffenland*', in *Annäherungen: Studien zur deutschen Literatur und Literaturwissenschaft im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hans Ester and Guillaume van Genert (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1985), p. 27.)

[10]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 30.

exalted, and everything is carefully structured and controlled. What about matters existential or metaphysical? We are certainly never given any indication that Johann is not a church-goer like all the other Buddenbrooks, and, while his faith may not be vibrant, his innate sense of order brings us rather closer to a definition of his era which is disappearing forever: an age of general ontological security where the world was ordered and human beings were in control, where profound metaphysical questions were not analysed in depth because there was no need to do so.

Another character whom we meet in these opening chapters and who is also a member of Johann's generation is the local minister, Pastor Wunderlich. As a representative of the church, it is interesting to find out what his attitudes are. Once again during the festivities, we read the following brief interchange between the 'Konsul' and the minister about Napoleon:

> '»Nein, nein, wir Jüngeren verstehen nicht mehr die Verehrungswürdigkeit des Mannes, der den Herzog von Enghien ermordete, der in Ägypten die achthundert Gefangenen niedermetzelte...«
>
> »Das ist alles möglicherweise übertrieben und gefälscht«, sagte Pastor Wunderlich. »... was die Gefangenen betrifft, so war ihre Exekution wahrscheinlich der wohlerwogene und notwendige Beschluß eines korrekten Kriegsrates...«'[11]

It is revealing that the minister holds politically very conservative ideas. (The claim is almost frighteningly comic that the mass execution of 800 prisoners of war could be 'wohlerwogen'!) He is just as conservative, if not more so, than Johann Buddenbrook. This causes us to wonder how sincere his Christian faith is. What this also illustrates is that Johann's conservatism was not at that time inconsistent with those who professed Christianity. For all his apparent cynicism he is a typical example of his age where everything is secure and ordered and individuals can live contentedly and unreflectively without being assailed by doubts and fears about the meaning of existence.

---

[11]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 28.

The opinion of Konsul Buddenbrook expressed in the above conversation with Pastor Wunderlich demonstrates a conflict of attitude between his generation and that of his father. The son is clearly more liberal. The conflict of attitude also extends to faith and religious conviction. If the eldest Buddenbrook's attitude is rather more complacent than devout, his son's attitude is quite the reverse. Throughout his life he expresses a deep-rooted devotion to Christianity and encourages his family (with little success, apart from his wife) to do the same. The following passage, in which he is writing about the birth of his second daughter Clara in the 'Familienpapiere', is typical:

> '»Führe du [meine Tochter], ach Herr! auf deinen Wegen, und schenke du ihr ein reines Herz, ... Denn wir wissen wohl, wie schwer es sei, von ganzer Seele zu glauben, daß der ganze Liebe süße Jesus mein sei, weil unser irdisches kleines schwaches Herz...«'[12]

Wolf points out that Jean's expressions are reminiscent of Pietism[13], and indeed his written prayer here, of which this is only a tiny extract, is so long and effusive that it becomes difficult to take it seriously. These are the outpourings of the committed Christian, and there can thus be no question that his world-view is entirely ordered. There is however a slight problem with Jean's Christianity, for while Wolf rather naïvely claims that he 'practices what he preaches'[14], it has been noted elsewhere that there is disparity between word and action[15]: the most obvious example is again in part I, when he and his father are considering his step-brother Gotthold's claim for a share in the company's success. Jean wavers in favour of Gotthold until he makes a few calculations as to the financial consequences of yielding to the claim, with the immediate response to his father '»Ich muß Ihnen abraten, nachzugeben!«'[16]

---

[12]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 53.

[13]Ernest M. Wolf, *Magnum Opus: Studies in the Narrative Fiction of Thomas Mann* (New York: Lang, 1989), p. 87. See also Heller, p. 40.

[14]Wolf, p. 89.

[15]Anna Hellersberg-Wendriner (*Mystik der Gottesferne: Eine Interpretation Thomas Manns* (Bern: Francke, 1960), p. 24) speaks of 'die sein ganzes Wesen durchdringende Verlogenheit'. See also T. J. Reed, *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 62-3, and Herbert Lehnert, 'Thomas Mann: *Buddenbrooks* (1901)', in *Deutsche Romane des 20. Jahrhunderts: Neue Interpretationen*, ed. Paul Michael Lützeler (Königstein/Ts: Athenäum, 1983), p. 32.

[16]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 49.

How may the various aspects of the age of order be brought together? It is an ordered, structured, secure world where people are not beset by existential doubts and uncertainties. It is also an age in which the world-view is predominantly theocentric, although there are varying degrees of religious faith. Furthermore, the fact that the Buddenbrooks see their lives as 'gelenkt' by God illustrates their conviction that there is no gap between God and man. It is a world where ontological security is not threatened. There are nevertheless discordant notes which lay the foundation for the decline from order into chaos. The complacent conservatism of the generation of Johann Buddenbrook Senior and Pastor Wunderlich raises the question, 'What is the value of the faith that they profess?' Moreover, what are the implications of Jean's Pietist faith and mildly hypocritical behaviour? These issues are the earliest seeds of metaphysical decline in the Buddenbrook family.

The Loss of Order

The bulk of *Buddenbrooks* dwells on the loss of order. The seeds of decline were already sown during the age of order, and these seeds take root and grow through the various generations, coming to their tragic fruition in the tormented characters of Thomas and his son Hanno. It is therefore the question of how this process comes to take hold of the Buddenbrook dynasty and dictates its development which presents itself as central to a discussion of the novel.

Johann Buddenbrook Senior's attitude towards matters metaphysical and existential is characterised by complacency and disinterest. It follows that such an attitude is a short step from a much more serious form of scepticism which stops believing in the existence of the Absolute (and therefore in any inherent universal order) altogether. There is however more in the way of the seeds of decline in Johann's character than we might initially imagine, and this can be seen in the way that he responds to death. We are told that he was devastated by the death of his first wife, with whom he was genuinely in love. Such a reaction is of course perfectly natural. Let us consider however his reaction to the death of his second wife Antoinette:

> 'Und als dann Madame Buddenbrook ihren letzten, ganz kurzen und kampflosen Seufzer getan hatte, ... da änderte sich seine Stimmung nicht, da weinte er nicht einmal, aber dies leise, erstaunte Kopfschütteln blieb ihm, und dies beinahe lächelnde »Kurios!« wurde sein Lieblingswort... Kein Zweifel, daß es auch mit Johann Buddenbrook zu Ende ging.'[17]

Death affects Johann rather more than he is prepared to admit. While there is no display of emotion whatsoever, and even although the relationship between man and wife was never particularly close[18], there is evidence that he has been shaken in a fairly profound way by this experience. The consequences are twofold: first of all, there is his now frequent use of the word 'kurios'. Since it is clearly not an 'everyday' word, it stands out

---

[17]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 71.

[18]'[Die alte Frau], die ihm niemals ein großes Glück, niemals einen großen Schmerz bereitet,' (*Buddenbrooks*, p. 71).

from the rest of the text, but what does it signify? Above all, Johann's sense of order and security is such that he has tended to take a simple and unreflective view of things. His use of this word must surely demonstrate that he has been jolted into some form of reflection, however minimal[19]. Life *cannot* be taken for granted, and there is something strange, unexplained, mysterious about it. The second consequence is to be found in the narrator's comment 'daß es auch mit Johann Buddenbrook zu Ende ging'. This witnessing of his wife's death would appear to have taken away some of his own vitality, and he thus no longer has the same secure confident hold on life which he previously enjoyed. This too must surely be indicative of the beginnings of a crisis in the Buddenbrook family.

The crisis in the Buddenbrook family deepens in the next generation. This may seem an odd claim, since Jean's Pietist faith has already been noted, and it may appear more appropriate to argue that the crisis is actually interrupted, even reversed. On a relatively trivial level, the mild hypocrisy which Jean exhibits should not be overlooked. His concern to manage carefully his financial situation illustrates that the Lord does not necessarily provide everything that the Buddenbrooks want, that their contentment is not to be found solely in spiritual terms. There are however more serious issues at stake, for, as the narrator comments just after Jean's death, Jean is 'der erste seines Geschlechtes ..., der unalltägliche, unbürgerliche und differenzierte Gefühle gekannt und gepflegt hatte'[20]. Jean's father, in ultimately becoming aware of the possibility of reflection, prefigures the much deeper way in which issues affect his son. Before considering his approach to specifically religious matters, it is interesting first to note the comment he makes during the festivities in part I regarding the Buddenbrook's unkempt garden:

> '»Ich ergehe mich sommers dort gern im Gestrüpp; aber alles wäre mir verdorben, wenn die schöne, freie Natur so kläglich zusammengeschnitten wäre ... wenn ich dort im hohen Grase unter dem wuchernden Gebüsch liege,

---

[19]I find James R. McWilliams assertion that 'the downfall of the family really begins here [when *Thomas marries Gerda*] in the third generation when biological "decadence" is infused into the clan from without' an almost incredible distortion of the text. (*Brother Artist: A Psychological Study of Thomas Mann's Fiction* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983), p. 16 and also p. 44.

[20]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 264.

> ist es mir eher, als gehörte ich der Natur und als hätte ich nicht das mindeste Recht über sie...«'[21]

Whereas his father was attracted by neo-classical austere form, Jean expresses a Romantic love for nature. Jean loves the garden in its 'natural', wild state, using the word 'Gestrüpp'. This is suggestive of a Romantic desire to get away from the formal civilisation of society towards a more primitive way of living. There is also something 'chaotic' about a 'Gestrüpp' which is in conflict with the securely ordered world we might expect him to prefer. These ideas are then reinforced and developed by the assertion that he does not have 'das mindeste Recht' over nature. This clearly runs counter to traditional thinking that man is in control of everything on earth, a control which is demonstrated by Jean's father's desire for a neatly cultivated garden. If Jean feels he is more a part of nature than superior to it, then he must have a greater degree of doubt than his father about how secure his position in the world is. Furthermore, the hint that nature has a dynamism all its own, combined with the image of the 'Gestrüpp', possibly also suggests an awareness of the presence of the forces of chaos.

It is in the light of this that we way now consider Jean's religious faith. His faith is only overtly the traditional faith of his forefathers. It is actually something of an obsession. Moreover, it becomes stronger as the years go by, and, while it becomes shared with his wife, it is a source of irritation for his children, especially Tony:

> 'Hauptsächlich aber ärgerte sie [Tony] sich über den immer religiöseren Geist, der ihr weitläufiges Vaterhaus erfüllte, denn des Konsuls fromme Neigungen traten in dem Grade, in welchem er betagt und kränklich wurde, immer stärker hervor, und seitdem die Konsulin alterte, begann auch sie an dieser Geistesrichtung Geschmack zu finden.'[22]

An obsession as strong as the Konsul's can only be motivated by a profound sense of existential necessity[23]. The fact that it increases as he becomes 'betagt und kränklich' is

---

[21]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 31.

[22]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 246.

[23]As Lehnert puts it, 'ein Zeichen für beginnende Existenzunsicherheit' (*Thomas Mann: Fiktion, Mythos,*

an indication that he is preparing himself for death, and doing so with a certain degree of desperation[24]. While he thus endorses a world-view which is ultimately ordered and controlled by God, the crisis nudged gently into motion by the father has deepened inasmuch as there is now a far greater degree of emotion and an enormous need to believe that his religion is true[25].

If we consider now the next generation of Buddenbrooks, and specifically Thomas, it can be discerned that it is in this character that the existential crisis becomes concentrated[26]. For Thomas' father the saving power of Christ is real and there is no gulf between God and man. With Thomas the gulf is perceived to reappear: man is once more separated from God[27]. A passage from part X, shortly before Thomas' death, gives us an indication of his world-view:

> 'Sein Lebtag vielmehr hatte er den ersten und letzten Dingen die weltmännische Skepsis seines Großvaters entgegengebracht; zu tief aber, zu geistreich und zu metaphysisch bedürftig, um in der behaglichen Oberflächlichkeit des alten Johann Buddenbrook Genüge zu finden, ...'[28]

Religion, p. 68).

[24]I think this is more accurate than Nachman's and Braverman's contention that Jean's 'Christianity was a manifestation of an urgent personal need to abandon the world'. (Larry David Nachman and Albert S. Braverman, 'Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*: Bourgeois Society and the Inner Life', *Germanic Review*, 44 (1970), 208.) His religion is a means of making him feel more secure in the world rather than fleeing entirely from it.

[25]It is interesting to compare Jean's attitude first with his wife's and then with the various people who visit the house in the name of the church. His wife, ostensibly at least, shares her husband's religious fervour, although we gain less insight into her character than we do into Jean's. On the other hand, an ironic comical aside by the narrator reveals the various visitors' true motives:

> '... denn das würdige Patrizierhaus in der Mengstraße, wo man, nebenbei bemerkt, so vorzüglich speiste, ...'

(Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 246.)

[26]R. Hinton Thomas is unconvincing when he says that 'Thomas is an artist in the Schopenhauerian sense that, called to the highest tasks, he suffers most.' (*Thomas Mann: The Mediation of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 52.) Art is not the major issue for Thomas Buddenbrook.

[27]It is important to be aware that in this context individuals perceive themselves as separate from God in the sense that they lose faith in Christ, and not in the orthodox theological sense that each person is separated from God by sin until repentance. ('For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God', Romans 3:23, *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984), p. 1131.)

[28]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 665.

It is easy to take the phrase 'die weltmännische Skepsis seines Großvaters' out of context and use it as evidence, first, that the grandfather is effectively an atheist, and second, that Thomas and his grandfather are exactly alike. While they are similar in many ways (this is mentioned frequently in the novel[29]), the similarities serve more to underline the differences. What follows in the above quotation changes this perception entirely. On the one hand the 'behagliche Oberflächlichkeit' points to the rather empty complacency of Johann. On the other hand the adjectives 'tief' and 'geistreich' and the adjectival phrase 'metaphysisch bedürftig' applied to Thomas make it clear how very different the two really are. If Thomas is 'tief' and 'geistreich', then it follows that he *cannot* share exactly the same kind of 'Skepsis' as his grandfather, for his grandfather never reflected enough to take any radical step in his religious life. If at the same time Thomas is 'metaphysisch bedürftig', then it follows that he shares his father's existential need, but does not find himself able to accept his father's devout faith. There is thus a much greater degree of doubt[30].

Thomas' metaphysical crisis hinges on a profound metaphysical need on the one hand and on doubt on the other. Furthermore, his metaphysical need is closely linked to his tragic perception of the world around him. To return briefly to the business and social world, when Thomas first embarks upon his career in the family firm, he does so with a determination and enthusiasm which brings the firm to the pinnacle of its achievement. His attitude to this achievement is however far from positive, as can be seen in part VIII, with deliberate irony, during the festivities marking the firm's 100th anniversary:

---

[29]For example, in chapter two of part I we are informed that 'er ähnelte in den Augen und in der Gesichtsform stark seinem Großvater'. (Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 16.)

[30]Lehnert points out that Mann was aware that Thomas in Greek was 'Didymos' or 'twin' and comments on the 'Außenseiterexistenz' which Thomas shares with his brother Christian. (*Thomas Mann: Fiktion, Mythos, Religion*, p. 70. See also Hans Wysling, '*Buddenbrooks*', in *Ausgewählte Aufsätze 1963-1995*, ed. Thomas Sprecher and Cornelia Bernini, Vol. XIII of *Thomas-Mann-Studien* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996), p. 201.) (See also Susanne Otto, *Literarische Produktion als egozentrische Variation des Problems von Identitätsfindung und -stabilisierung: Ursprung, Grundlagen und Konsequenzen bei Thomas Mann. Analyse des novellistischen Frühwerks mit Perspektive auf das Gesamtwerk* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1982), pp. 146-7, for a further discussion of the similarity between the two brothers.) While it is purely speculative, it may be significant that Thomas and Didymos were also the two names of Christ's doubting disciple.

> 'Aber obgleich der Lärm der Instrumente, das Stimmengewirr und der Anblick der vielen Menschen seine Nerven erschütterten und zusammen mit der Erinnerung an die Vergangenheit, an seinen Vater, oftmals eine schwache Rührung in ihm aufsteigen ließen, so überwog doch der Eindruck des Lächerlichen und Peinlichen, das für ihn dem Ganzen anhaftete,'[31]

Thomas has lost all interest in the business; the pleasure it once gave him is no more than a distant memory. He finds his work empty and meaningless. When we consider that his business life was essentially his entire life, it becomes evident that this attitude reveals that he finds the world around him pointless[32]. When this opinion takes root, it is easy to conclude that the world is beginning to seem chaotic. This feeling is reinforced by the description of the 'Lärm der Instrumente' and 'das Stimmengewirr', conveying an impression of a chaotic jumble of sounds from which Thomas is separate and isolated[33].

It was mentioned earlier that a fundamental aspect of decline is a perception of a gulf between God and mankind. Faced with various problems, especially financial losses which the family has incurred, it becomes clear that Thomas finds himself in a situation where he not only has doubts about religion in vague terms but he actually begins to doubt God's ability to intervene in human life. This is illustrated near the end of part VII when Thomas has a row with his mother, after she agrees to give his sister Clara's inheritance to her son-in-law after Clara's death:

> '»Wäre Vater am Leben, wäre er hier bei uns zugegen: er würde die Hände falten und uns alle der Gnade Gottes empfehlen.«'[34]

The specifics of the problem here are largely irrelevant; what matters is Thomas' response. He acknowledges what his father would have done: he would have called upon

---

[31]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 501.

[32]It is also here that we have the clearest evidence that Thomas has realised that 'the acquisition and preservation of money' is assuredly *not* 'the ultimate purpose of existence' (Hollingdale, p. 26). This is the culmination of the process which has been unfolding in the Buddenbrook family.

[33]Ursula Kirchhoff comments also that there is considerable irony in the fact that the music going on around Thomas is both banal and joyful (*Die Darstellung des Festes im Roman um 1900: Ihre thematische und funktionale Bedeutung* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1969), p. 36).

[34]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 444.

God's saving grace and trusted Him for help. The situation now however is very different, because Thomas is not advocating this as a feasible course of action. While it could be argued that this is exaggeration on Thomas' part in order to emphasise the seriousness of the situation, nevertheless the fact of Thomas' increasing doubts cannot be ignored. There is no indication of a course of action that Thomas would advocate at this juncture: he simply does not know[35]. While there is still a vague hint of belief that there is a God, he does not find himself able to put his faith in Him.

This is only an outline of Thomas' spiritual crisis. The other major issues which surround this crisis (most especially how he attempts to deal with his sense of chaos) will be examined later in this analysis. It is important however, when considering the loss of order, to consider one further aspect of the novel, namely the last scene, when the remaining female members of the Buddenbrook family are gathered, together with Sesemi Weichbrodt, Tony's former schoolmistress. In response to all of Tony's doubts about the after-life and Gotthold's daughter Friederike's half-hearted '»Es gibt ein Wiedersehen«'[36], Sesemi Weichbrodt says the following:

> '»*Es ist so!*« sagte sie mit ihrer ganzen Kraft und blickte alle herausfordernd an.
>
> Sie stand da, eine Siegerin in dem guten Streite, ... bucklig, winzig und bebend vor Überzeugung, eine kleine, strafende, begeisterte Prophetin.'[37]

The words themselves bespeak religious faith, and quite clearly that is how Sesemi intends them[38], but the context suggests otherwise. First, her demeanour and exaggerated

---

[35]Hugh Ridley hints at this but does not state it explicitly. (*Mann: 'Buddenbrooks'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 41-2.)

[36]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 774.

[37]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 774.

[38]The decline from order into chaos does not affect everyone at the same rate or to the same extent. This does not however necessarily deny the Buddenbrooks' representative status: if 'das Geschäftsleben' is 'ein Abbild des großen und ganzen Lebens' (*Buddenbrooks*, p. 478; see also above, p. 16), then they are assuredly intended to be representative of their age. (See further Helmut Koopmann, *Die Entwicklung des »intellektualen Romans« bei Thomas Mann: Untersuchungen zur Struktur von »Buddenbrooks«, »Königliche Hoheit« und »Der Zauberberg«*, 3rd ed. (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1980), p. 120.)

The question of the representative nature of the Buddenbrooks' decline is an interesting one: the

behaviour are unquestionably comic, and the narrator reinforces this comedy by his use of mock-heroic vocabulary such as 'Siegerin in dem guten Streite'. Since she is mocked in this way, we do not take her claim seriously. Second, there is the narrator's choice of the word 'Prophetin' as the very last word of the novel. It is another example of the mock-heroic style, but it also has a specific resonance in the novel as a whole. There is not space for a full discussion of Sesemi's character here, but it is worth mentioning[39] that Sesemi is anything but a 'prophetess'. Her '»Sei glöcklich, du *gutes* Kend!«'[40] at weddings is always followed by a disastrous marriage[41]. Thus we reject what she says. What effect does this have at the end of the novel? The Buddenbrook dynasty has gone from an ordered, if complacently superficial, world-view, through an awakening to a metaphysical need which clings desperately to the ordered world-view, to doubt, despair and separation from God. (Thomas' son Hanno, incidentally, never really has any wish even to believe[42].) It is then the narrator who closes the book with his own ironic

---

novel opens with the fall of the Ratenkamp family still a recent event, and the sickliness and poor teeth of Moritz, son of the rival family Hagenström (*Buddenbrooks*, pp. 63, 243), indicate that the same fate will befall them. While we cannot speculate about their world-views, ordered or otherwise, nonetheless Mann does appear to suggest that this is a continuous and inexorable decline from order into chaos. (The likely fate of the Hagenströms' is completely overlooked by Hollingdale (p. 28) and also by Swales (*Thomas Mann: A Study* (London: Heinemann, 1980), p. 28, but not by Wolf (p. 25).) Ernst Keller is particularly interesting in this debate when he suggests that the Buddenbrooks' story is an example of a 'sich immer wiederholenden Zyklus des Geschehens'. ('Das Problem »Verfall«', in *'Buddenbrooks'-Handbuch*, ed. Ken Moulden and Gero von Wilpert (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1988), p. 161. See also Uwe Ebel, 'Welthaftigkeit als Welthaltigkeit. Zum Verhältnis von mimetischem und poetischem Anspruch in Thomas Manns "Buddenbrooks"', in *Gedenkschrift für Thomas Mann. 1875-1975*, ed. Rolf Wiecker (Kopenhagen: Verlag Text und Kontext, 1975), p. 23.)

Jochen Vogt on the other hand holds that the Buddenbrooks are exceptional cases in the overall picture of Germany's 'Bürgertum' in the nineteenth century, with its increasing confidence, especially economic confidence. (*Thomas Mann: »Buddenbrooks«* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1983), p. 69. See further Burghard Dedner, 'Kultur und Wahrheit. Zur thematischen Dialektik von Thomas Manns Frühwerk', *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft*, 27 (1983), 347.) While this may be true in the real world, it does not appear true within the fictional world of the novel. Furthermore, comparison with Kafka and Cernuda will demonstrate that Thomas' existential crisis is far from peculiar to him.

[39]Hollingdale's reading that the novel 'ends with a brief expression of religious hope' is as remarkable as it is inaccurate (p. 186). Mann himself speaks in general terms about the 'Pessimismus' in the novel, which he 'nahm ... aus der Luft und aus [sich] selber', 'Brief an Agnes E. Meyer', 26.1.1951, *Thomas Mann. Selbstkommentare: »Buddenbrooks«*, ed. Wysling (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1990), p. 127.

[40]For example, at Tony's second marriage (Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 364).

[41]This is something which Mann himself highlights. See 'Brief an Eugen Kalkschmidt', 16.2.1904, *Thomas Mann. Selbstkommentare*, p. 29.

[42]See also Hollingdale, p. 57.

comment which reveals that he too doubts that there is order in the universe[43].

---

[43]An *existential* problem is thus highlighted at the end, contrasting with Hollingdale's reading that (p. 151) '*Buddenbrooks* presents us with ... decline as a loss of wealth, ... status, ... moral certainty and fibre, ... decline as "artistic decadence": but *underpinning* them all is decline as physiological decay.' (My emphasis.) Apart from the end of the novel, all of these factors happen at once, and one does not necessarily follow from the other. In addition, the social and existential spheres are very closely intertwined, into which scheme Hollingdale's categories of 'wealth ... status ... moral certainty and fibre' can be placed. As for the 'artistic decadence', this is important for Hanno, but it is very questionable whether Christian is 'artistic' at all: his interest in the theatre bespeaks more of decadent dilettantism than anything else.

The physiological decline is certainly relevant. (For the various significant physiological factors in the novel, see Han Ki-Sang, 'Physiognomik als technisches Darstellungsmittel im Werk Thomas Manns. Vom Naturalistisch-Realistichen bis zum Mythisch-Utopischen', Thesis Universität Gießen 1980, especially pp. 166-73.) It can, however, before Hanno, be interpreted as a convenient way of disposing of the various protagonists once their inner struggles have taken place. (For all Christian's neuroses, we have very little medical evidence of genuine physical illness, and it could well be psychosomatic.) Furthermore, this reading must inevitably be diametrically opposed to Heller's comment (p. 32) that 'the novel, in all its unsparing pessimism and sceptical irony, conveys a sense of meaningful order ... in the world itself'.

The Consequences of the Loss of Order

Buddenbrooks may close with a statement that the world is disordered, but the novel deals further with what results from that loss of order. If the world is chaotic, then it will have profound repercussions for the way people live their lives (or at least for those sensitive enough to realise it). It is these consequences which will form this final part of the discussion of the loss of the Absolute in *Buddenbrooks*.

As Thomas Buddenbrook grows older, he thinks about his own mortality, and these thoughts so intensify his spiritual crisis that they all but destroy him. Far from being able to have recourse to religion, his sense of ontological insecurity makes the emotional catastrophe more or less inevitable. The following passage from part X is significant, shortly before he discovers a volume of Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*:

> 'Sobald er nämlich sein zeitliches Ende nicht mehr als eine ferne, theoretische und unbeträchtliche Notwendigkeit, sondern als etwas ganz Nahes und Greifbares betrachtete, für das es unmittelbare Vorbereitungen zu treffen galt, begann er zu grübeln, in sich zu forschen, sein Verhältnis zum Tode und den unirdischen Fragen zu prüfen... und bereits bei den ersten derartigen Versuchen ergab sich ihm als Resultat eine heillose Unreife und Unbereitschaft seines Geistes, zu sterben.'[44]

Hollingdale points to the concept of 'decadence' to sum up the state into which the Buddenbrook family declines[45]. Hollingdale refers to decadence in the specifically Nietzschean sense of a diminution of the 'will to power'[46]. Decadence is unquestionably present in the novel[47]: the later Buddenbrooks are 'decadent' inasmuch as they lose all their vitality and will even to be alive, but this novel is no mere reiteration of Nietzschean

---

[44]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 665.

[45]Hollingdale, pp. 56-62.

[46]In *Der Antichrist*, Nietzsche says:

> 'Wo in irgendwelcher Form der Wille zur Macht niedergeht, gibt es jedesmal auch einen physiologischen Rückgang, eine *décadence*.'

(Nietzsche, *Werke*, II, p. 1177.) Also quoted in Hollingdale, p. 56.

[47]See also Reed, p. 48, where Mann's own assertion of the importance of Nietzschean decadence is stressed.

philosophy. To express it in terms of 'decadence' suggests a Nietzschean lack of sympathy for those who fail to be 'Übermenschen', and, while Hollingdale is right to highlight the unpleasant side of Thomas' character[48], he is not always 'utterly odious'[49]: we are able to sympathise with him. Moreover, by part X, we are given insight into the genuine sense of human tragedy which is affecting Thomas. The immediate consequence for Thomas of the loss of order runs somewhat deeper than the concept of 'decadence': he finds human existence completely meaningless (both his own, personal existence as well as the external world around him) and as a result, in the face of death, he is unprepared and powerless. If life is without meaning, then Thomas has realised that concepts such as 'Wille zur Macht' and 'Übermensch' are nonsensical. On the other hand, if death is without meaning, then Thomas is facing the prospect of nihilistic annihilation.

Thomas' relationships with other people are also important. His parents and grandparents had maintained sound and healthy relationships with others (if rather formal), and initially Thomas follows in that vein. As time passes, however, and his sense of inner composure disintegrates, his relationships too become more and more damaged. It is in fact the relationships with those who ought to be closest to him, i.e., his own family, which come under the greatest strain. The disintegration of the family unit can be linked to the loss of absolute order, for Christianity exalts the importance of the family for security and stability. In any case, the more depressed and withdrawn Thomas becomes, the more he argues with his family: with his mother, his brother, his son[50]. It is perhaps his relationship with Hanno which is most disturbing, as we should expect affection towards Hanno for at least two reasons: first, he is his natural son, and second, he is a male heir to continue the Buddenbrook line. Hanno is of course completely inadequate as an heir, but that is because he embodies too many of his father's qualities

---

[48]For example, Thomas' despising of his uncle for not conforming and marrying someone of the same social position (Hollingdale, pp. 57-8, and Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 281).

[49]Hollingdale, p. 58.

[50]Swales makes the interesting additional point that 'the Fischergrube house is an expression of the increasing abstraction and isolation of modern life', contrasting with the 'Haus in der Mengstraße' where family and firm were together, not separate ('Symbolic Patterns or Realistic Plenty? Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* and the European Novel', *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 60 (1989-90), 91).

(as well as his mother's), intensified to a remarkable degree. Rather than showing sympathy and understanding, however, Thomas is brutal and dictatorial, at times almost tyrannical[51]. The sense of despair has only created further barriers[52].

What about Hanno himself? Both his erotic interest (an aspect of life which is treated extremely reticently in *Buddenbrooks*) and his love for art, while of relevance, will be dealt with much later in this study. It was mentioned earlier that Hanno is an inadequate boy, with no desire to be alive[53]: before his tyrannical father he is weak, feeble and pathetic, almost a prefiguration of Kafka's feeble son figures. More important here however is the nature of Hanno's death from typhoid:

> 'Mit dem Typhus ist es folgendermaßen bestellt.
> Der Mensch fühlt eine seelische Mißstimmung in sich entstehen, die sich rasch vertieft und zu einer hinfälligen Verzweiflung wird, usw.'[54]

The encyclopædic nature of this chapter is startling[55]. The description of Hanno's death is the clearest expression in the novel that, for Hanno, existence is not merely something which takes place *within* a world of chaos, but that it is effectively *equated* with chaos itself. Hanno's death is no more than the biological means of removing him from an existence in which order is fundamentally impossible. Moreover, the encyclopædic description is an illustration of the belief that life and death are biological processes, *not* the working-out of a divine 'plan'[56]. Thus the final consequence of the Buddenbrooks'

---

[51]An example is his 'testing' of Hanno to see if he is adequate to fulfil the rôle of his successor (*Buddenbrooks*, pp. 520-1). His argument with his mother is evidence of similar behaviour (p. 439ff).

[52]There is not space to speak in detail of the isolation and alienation which other characters suffer, but it is worth noting that both Christian and Hanno themselves have very poor relationships with others. See also Martin Travers, *Thomas Mann* (Houndmills: MacMillan, 1992), p. 23.

[53]Koopmann ('Hanno Buddenbrook, Tonio Kröger und Tadzio: Anfang und Begründung des Mythos im Werk Thomas Manns', in Wiecker, p. 58) comments that Hanno 'erscheint ... stets in unmittelbarer Nachbarschaft des Todes'.

[54]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 766.

[55]Wolf (pp. 139-53) informs us that the chapter was largely copied from an encyclopædia. See also Christian Grawe, '»Eine Art von höherem Abschreiben.« Zum »Typhus«-Kapitel in Thomas Manns *Buddenbrooks*', *Thomas Mann Jahrbuch*, 5 (1992), especially 118ff.

[56]Richard Sheppard raises the question of 'Fate' as an external force operating in the lives of the Buddenbrooks ('Realism plus Mythology: A Reconsideration of the Problem of "Verfall" in Thomas Mann's

loss of order is a more generalised statement on the part of the narrator, and this generalisation is confirmed by the complete impersonality of the description: we are not told until after Hanno is dead and buried that he was the subject of this chapter (although we do of course strongly suspect that this is the case).

It is at this stage in the process of decline from order into chaos that Mann effectively concludes his analysis. It may certainly be possible to argue that there are hints of a portrayal of an 'absurd' world which points forward towards the writings of Kafka, but they do not form part of Mann's major writings. (One possible example is the early story *Tobias Mindernickel*, where the protagonist Mindernickel is lonely and acquires a dog. He then frustrates the dog by refusing to let it out, and he intermittently caresses and beats it, before killing it in a fit of rage. While there is no attempt to determine an underlying logic to Mindernickel's bizarre cruelty (which suggests that it is absurd)[57], there is at the same time an indefinable sentimentality about the story. This both assures its position as a minor work and prevents us from drawing too definitive conclusions about a world-view more radically despairing than in *Buddenbrooks*[58].) There is of course one further consequence of the loss of the Absolute, and that is the desire to find it again,

---

Buddenbrooks', *Modern Language Review*, 89 (1994), 916-41). As Sheppard argues, there are certain features in the text which suggest there is something inexorable about the Buddenbrook's decline which cannot be explained in purely realistic terms, especially various 'Leitmotive': the colour grey, for example, is very common throughout the novel and it 'becomes so intertwined with a dark sense of primal terror that it ceases to be a mere descriptive detail and becomes a fateful and symbolic leitmotif' ('Realism plus Mythology', 920). It is difficult however to reconcile this with the excessively biological depiction of Hanno's death, which can only point away from supernatural forces. When we consider also that the ending of the novel denies the existence of the after-life (see above, p. 29f), again denying the supernatural, then it may at least be possible that the novel suggests that the material world has many *fate-like* elements which are there for us to see if we look carefully enough, but which are not necessarily *in themselves* linked to some external power.

[57]Klaus Rainer Goll interprets this story in terms of the 'Leben-Geist-Dualismus', arguing that Mindernickel and the dog represent the two different poles, and are therefore incompatible ('Der Mensch der Decadence. Zum Motiv des Außenseiters im Frühwerk Thomas Manns', *Hefte der deutschen Thomas-Mann-Gesellschaft*, 1 (1981), 20). I am not convinced the story is so profound.

[58]Hollingdale (p. 78) discusses the 'meaninglessness' of Mindernickel's life and says that it is 'excessively painful'. As a result, Mann adopted the approach of ironic distance in order to 'tone down' this pain, of which the encyclopædic depiction of Hanno's death is an example (see above, p. 33). While Hollingdale's argument is certainly plausible, it is at least debatable whether such a strong case can be based on such a slight story.

but we should focus first upon the more radical Kafka.

Franz Kafka

The Existential-Metaphysical Significance of Kafka's Writing

There is one fundamental difference between the writings of Mann and Kafka, and that relates to the *portrayal* of the world. Mann kept his stories and novels firmly rooted within a recognisable reality. While 'ideas' play an ever-increasing rôle in his work, nevertheless we are never required to suspend our disbelief to an excessive degree. The exact opposite is true of Kafka. As Politzer comments, 'it is reality itself which appears highly questionable'[59]. Kafka's protagonists inhabit a world which is not tangibly our own, and yet it is at the same time narrated with a simplicity and 'matter-of-factness' which demands to be accepted as real. While this study is concerned primarily with the similarities between the German language context on the one hand and the Spanish context on the other, nevertheless this difference between Mann and Kafka does conceal a certain amount of common thematic ground. The principal works of interest by Kafka at this stage will be his last (incomplete) novel *Das Schloß*, and some of his short stories, including *Der Jäger Gracchus*, *Josefine, die Sängerin oder das Volk der Mäuse*, *In der Strafkolonie*, *Die Verwandlung* and *Blumfeld, ein älterer Junggeselle.*

There are two opposing camps into which Kafka criticism may largely be said to fall (this is of course a simplification but nevertheless not without justification): there are those who interpret his work as primarily existential and those who see it as socio-political. Herbert Kraft for example asserts that what Kafka presents is a vision of a totalitarian regime, and denies the possibility that the fundamental problems of existence are tackled[60]. In recent years a third branch of research has become added, heavily

---

[59]Heinz Politzer, *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), p. 250.

[60]Herbert Kraft, *Someone like K.: Kafka's Novels*, trans. R. Kavanagh (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1991). The following example is typical (p. 93), relating to *Das Schloß*:

> 'The landlord conducts himself according to the basic rule of every non-democratic social system.'

Another critic who emphasises the socio-political side of Kafka's writing (in this case the socio-economic in particular) is Bluma Goldstein, 'Bachelors and Work: Social and Economic Conditions in "The Judgment", "The Metamorphosis" and *The Trial*', in *The Kafka Debate: New Perspectives for our Time*, ed. Angel

influenced by Post-Structuralist literary theory, which largely leaves to one side such thematic questions to concentrate on Kafka's style[61], and even at times to explore the degree to which Kafka's work reflects the rôle of writing in his own life[62]. If we concentrate on the existential/socio-political dispute, which type of reading is better supported by the text? Let us consider the following passage from chapter five of the unfinished novel *Das Schloß*:

> 'Der direkte Verkehr mit den Behörden war ja nicht allzu schwer, denn die Behörden hatten, so gut sie auch organisiert sein mochten, immer nur im Namen entlegener, unsichtbarer Herren entlegene, unsichtbare Dinge zu verteidigen, während K. für etwas lebendigst Nahes kämpfte, für sich selbst;'[63]

What is fundamental to the whole of Kafka's creative *œuvre* is the ambiguous or even multivocal nature of the writing. If we follow through a socio-political argument for this passage, then we can point to the 'Behörden' and the 'Herren'. Both of these words suggest some distant, faceless bureaucracy. This can also be related to Kafka's own experience of the insurance company where he worked[64]. To stop here however is to

---

Flores (New York: Gordian Press, 1977), pp. 147-75.

[61]Charles Bernheimer (*Flaubert and Kafka: Studies in Psychopoetic Structure* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 208) argues for 'the Castle's radically textual structure', basing his argument on the profusion of books that appear to exist in the castle's offices. I find this an exaggeration. Deirdre Vincent on the other hand somewhat pejoratively asserts that 'our diversity of interpretive approaches ... seems ... to be nothing other than the desire to fill in and thus render harmless the potential abyss that his texts represent' ('"I'm the King of the Castle": Franz Kafka and the Well-Tempered Reader', in *Critical Essays on Franz Kafka*, ed. Ruth V. Gross (Boston, Massachusetts: G. K. Hall, 1990), pp. 273-4). If this is the case, then I can see no point whatsoever in either reading or attempting to interpret Kafka's writing.

[62]See for example Stanley Corngold's interpretation of *Das Urteil* (*Franz Kafka: The Necessity of Form* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 24-46), which argues that the protagonist Georg Bendemann is a projection of Kafka the writer. Certainly this is interesting, but a very close identification between Bendemann and Kafka must be maintained in order to sustain this sort of theory. It does in my opinion make for an extremely biased reading.

[63]Franz Kafka, *Das Schloß*, in *Gesammelte Werke in acht Bänden*, ed. Max Brod (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1975-83), p. 58. All subsequent references will be to this edition. For convenience, only the title of the relevant volume (abbreviated where appropriate) will subsequently be given.

[64]As Max Brod informs us ('Franz Kafka. Eine Biographie', in *Über Franz Kafka* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1974), pp. 77-8):

> 'Es ist klar, daß Kafka einen großen Teil seiner Welt- und Lebenskenntnis, sowie seines skeptischen Pessimismus aus amtlichen Erfahrungen, aus der Berührung mit den Unrecht

make the sort of mistake which Kraft makes, refusing to countenance other interpretations. Perhaps the most crucial phrase in the above passage is 'kämpfte, für sich selbst'. In its most basic sense, K. is acting 'on his own behalf', thus supporting the socio-political interpretations. Yet the phrasing is very subtle and suggests more. Rather than merely establishing a contrast between the behaviour of the authorities on the one hand and K. on the other, this comment demonstrates that K.'s struggle is literally 'for himself', that is, for his own being, for himself in an existential sense. Once this has been recognised, we realise the further significance of other terminology: for example the adjective 'unsichtbar' applied to the 'Herren' lends their existence an aura of a force outwith the human sphere. This is reinforced by the repetition of the same adjective, the second time applied to 'Dinge'. What is crucial in the novel is that Kafka does not specify what the castle represents. 'Dinge' is clearly very vague and suggestive. If Kafka uses language in such a way, then we as readers have a right to understand it in different ways. Furthermore, the sense of something beyond this world is reinforced by the sentence following the above quotation, where there is a reference to 'Kräfte ..., an die er ... glauben konnte'. This is not however to suggest that the castle can be interpreted exclusively as a sphere of transcendence and order. As well as the ambiguous phraseology employed, the narrative perspective here, as is often the case, is not entirely clear. The fact that the above quotation is most probably recorded from K.'s point of view would cast doubt on how objectively we may state one interpretation or indeed another (although, since the principal concern is with K.'s own motivations, such a problem is of secondary importance). In addition, it must be borne in mind that Kafka at times uses language to tease rather than to inform, so we are once again prevented from drawing any definite conclusions.

How can we break out of this interpretative 'vicious circle'? The 'truth' (if there be such a thing) lies in the very ambiguity itself. Kafka presents us with a number of texts which cannot be 'pinned down' exclusively to one interpretation or another, using language which is deliberately suggestive and evocative rather than explicit. We then

---

leidenden Arbeitern und aus dem Getriebe schleppenden amtlichen Geschäftsgangs, dem stagnierenden Leben der Akten empfangen hat.'

complete the text by bringing to it our own culture and experience which respond to the various linguistic signals which Kafka offers. These responses may well vary even within the individual reader[65], and, as mentioned in the introduction[66], this can be a source of difficulty in interpretation, since the reader's culture and experience can erect a barrier between him or her and the text and thus bias the reading. Similarly, Umberto Eco warns against 'the overestimation of the importance of clues' which he calls 'overinterpretation'[67]. It is nevertheless too extreme to assert that those various linguistic signals do not have certain clearly definable echoes and resonances[68]. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be primarily on the existential import of Kafka's *œuvre*, because, in comparison with Mann and Cernuda, it is that which comes to the fore. The possibility of other interpretations, both in isolation and in comparison with texts by other authors, is not of course discounted.

---

[65]For Wolfgang Iser, the response of the reader is an integral part of literature:

> '... the literary work has two poles, which we might call the artistic, and the aesthetic: the artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the aesthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader.'

('The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach', in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1988), p. 212.)

[66]See above, p.11.

[67]Umberto Eco, 'Overinterpreting Texts', in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 49.

[68]These resonances are discussed also by Paul J. Schumacher, 'Transcendence in Kafka's *Castle*: An Existential View', *Midwest Quarterly*, 32 (1991), especially 396 & 398.

The Age of Order

Kafka's writing presents a picture of a completely disordered world, where events and experiences seem to make little sense. It therefore at first may seem strange even to consider an 'age of order' in his work. Certainly it does not receive anything like the degree of attention that it does in Mann's work, but at the same time it is not entirely absent, for while there is no text which deals primarily with this issue, there are occasional hints, both in *Das Schloß* and in *Josefine, die Sängerin oder das Volk der Mäuse* and *In der Strafkolonie*.

Kafka does not consider religious faith and order in a way that can readily be compared with *Buddenbrooks*. Indeed, the image of order, such as it is, is rather different from the one in the earlier novel. One of Kafka's major psychological preoccupations (which will not form a significant part of this study) was with the concept of guilt[69] (*Der Prozeß*, indeed, is concerned predominantly with this issue), which most probably has its origins in Kafka's own relationship with his tyrannical father. Guilt in Kafka is normally coupled with a tyrannical authority, before which the protagonist feels guilty and inadequate. This tyrannical authority is not limited to father figures. When Kafka presents images of order, the most striking feature is their authoritarian nature. If we consider first the short story *In der Strafkolonie*, one of the few works published in Kafka's lifetime, then we see perhaps the most extreme example imaginable of this. Rather than a God of love in whom to trust and believe, there is an evil, vengeful authority which dispenses arbitrary justice. The story deals with the guilt-punishment theme and with the authority itself, which, significantly, is now in decline. The dispensing of justice as it used to be is described by the punishment camp's officer in the following terms:

> '»Wie nahmen wir alle den Ausdruck der Verklärung von dem gemarterten Gesicht, wie hielten wir unsere Wangen in den Schein dieser endlich

---

[69]By means of an 'objective' study of Kafka's dreams, Hall and Lind manage to come to the remarkable conclusion that Kafka's 'guilt complex was no stronger than that of other men' (Calvin S. Hall and Richard E. Lind, *Dreams, Life and Literature: A Study of Franz Kafka* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. 88). I find it difficult to take this claim seriously, at least in the context of Kafka's literary output.

> erreichten und schon vergehenden Gerechtigkeit! Was für Zeiten, mein Kamerad!«'[70]

A punishment camp might seem to point towards a totalitarian regime. While there are parallels, the sentences quoted demonstrate that that is not the only significance. The officer claims that previously the execution was beneficial, both to the condemned man and to the spectators. The linguistic signals, especially 'Verklärung' and 'gemartert', suggest a religious import, evoking ideas of blood sacrifice, as well as 'justice'. These ideas must be intended to suggest a parallel with Christ's death, but it is the differences which indicate what these 'Zeiten' must have been like[71]. The nostalgia suggests that the structure of the world was accepted as positive. The evidence, however, appears to contradict this. This 'order' has an absolute hold over humanity, but with no concern for its well-being. Everything about it is extreme, repulsive and horrific, and as readers it is well nigh impossible to endorse the officer's enthusiasm. Indeed, when the officer himself is executed at the end of the story there is no evidence of the 'Verklärung' of which he speaks here. While this does not disprove a perceived existential significance, it unquestionably undermines its value[72]. Curiously enough, however, as Pasley remarks, there is no joy registered in the story now that the old order has disintegrated, but instead 'the traveller slips hurriedly away from the island, as if in flight'[73]. There would thus appear to be a mystery about this old order which Kafka articulates, but refuses to explain: for all that we might be repelled by the old order, there still appears to be an incomprehensible cause to lament its passing.

---

[70]Kafka, *Erzählungen*, p. 164.

[71]I find Klaus Mladek's interpretation that 'Der Reisende, der Verurteilte und der Soldat sind die fast stummen Leser und Beobachter des Schreibprozesses' a little unconvincing ('»Ein eigentümlicher Apparat«. Franz Kafka's »In der Strafkolonie«', in *Franz Kafka*, ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold (München: Edition Text und Kritik, 1994), p. 120).

[72]There is some truth in Roy Pascal's comment that the various religious analogies in this story 'might just as easily indicate a vicious misguided parody of faith' (*Kafka's Narrators: A Study of his Stories and Sketches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 80). Walter H. Sokel (*Franz Kafka: Tragik und Ironie* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1976), p. 127) mentions in addition that 'das Strafsystem kennt kein Jenseits, keine eigentliche Transzendenz'. Wilhelm Emrich, on the other hand, referring to the 'total guilt of existence', comes to the bizarre conclusion that 'it is possible to explain the inhumanity and absurdity of this procedure' (*Franz Kafka: A Critical Study of his Writings*, trans. Sheema Zeben Buehne (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1968), pp. 270-1).

[73]Malcolm Pasley, '"In the Penal Colony"', in Flores, p. 301.

Nostalgia for an age that is past appears also in the later story *Josefine, die Sängerin oder das Volk der Mäuse*. This story speaks first of the power of Josefine's singing, and then steadily casts doubt upon its value, asking questions and providing no answers. After speaking of the 'Macht des Gesanges' in the second sentence[74], by the end of the second paragraph it is 'nichts Außerordentliches'[75]. There is little in the story which could be construed as having a genuine metaphysical or existential significance, and yet the following is revealing:

> 'Ist es denn überhaupt Gesang? Trotz unserer Unmusikalität haben wir Gesangsüberlieferungen; in den alten Zeiten unseres Volkes gab es Gesang; Sagen erzählen davon und sogar Lieder sind erhalten, die freilich niemand mehr singen kann. Eine Ahnung dessen, was Gesang ist, haben wir also, und dieser Ahnung entspricht Josefinens Kunst eigentlich nicht.'[76]

Leaving the artistic import to one side, if we concentrate on the phrasing, we notice that the various concepts are phrased in such a way that they are evocative of a deeper significance: there was once a concept 'Gesang' which used to exist but does not any longer; there is still an 'Ahnung' of what 'Gesang' once was; the existence of songs is known but they can no longer be sung. There can be no question that the 'Gesang' and 'Lieder' of the story are not exact equivalents of what we conventionally understand by such terms. 'Gesang' seems to be something of an 'absolute' term for this community, with an almost mythical quality, which in turn is underscored by the omission of the definite article. It is precisely this mythical quality which is the key to understanding its significance: it is evocative of a mythical age, of a lost primitivity[77]. This part of the story

---

[74]Kafka, *Erzählungen*, p. 200.

[75]Kafka, *Erzählungen*, p. 201. Christine Lubkoll argues further that music from the narrator's perspective 'verweist auf eine Abwesenheit' ('Dies ist kein Pfeifen: Musik und Negation in Franz Kafkas Erzählung *Josefine, die Sängerin oder Das Volk der Mäuse*', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 66 (1992), 759).

[76]Kafka, *Erzählungen*, p. 201.

[77]Thomas Vitzthum analyses the way in which the narrator casts doubt on the value of Josefine's singing, remarking particularly on the narrator's comments that there is 'Opposition' to Josefine among the mice, 'zu der [er] auch halb gehör[t]' ('A Revolution in Writing: The Overthrow of Epic Storytelling by Written Narrative in Kafka's *Josefine, die Sängerin*', *Symposium*, 46 (1993), 273, and Kafka, *Erzählungen*, p. 202).

makes much greater sense when we think of it in terms of this imagery, but, as always with Kafka, a word of caution is required: the second part of the title, 'das Volk der Mäuse', undermines the seriousness of the story. 'Mice' lend the story the quality of a fairy-tale (or even a cartoon), and therefore Kafka may be being playful[78]. That said, the expressed nostalgia for a (literally!) more 'harmonic' age is still not without its validity[79].

The short stories are only of secondary importance in this thesis, so it is vital not to omit what will be the primary focus within Kafka's *œuvre*, *Das Schloß*, from this discussion. If we accept the premise that the novel has existential significance, then it follows that the castle itself is some kind of image of transcendent order. How do the villagers live in relation to the castle? Throughout the novel we actually see and hear very little of the ordinary people in the village; the novel concentrates far more on a very small number who are exceptional cases: Frieda (the lover of the important official Klamm), and Barnabas and his family (who are ostracised). We are however given one or two clues in the opening scenes when K. arrives in the village. When K. first attempts to reach the castle, he becomes stuck in the snow and seeks refuge in a nearby house:

> 'Nach einem Weilchen sagte er aber doch: »Wenn Ihr wollt, fahre ich Euch mit meinem Schlitten.« — »Tut das, bitte«, sagte K. erfreut, »wieviel verlangt Ihr dafür?« — »Nichts«, sagte der Mann. K. wunderte sich sehr. »Ihr seid doch der Landvermesser«, sagte der Mann erklärend, »und gehört zum Schloß.« ... Das Ganze machte nicht den Eindruck besonderer Freundlichkeit, sondern eher den einer Art sehr eigensüchtigen, ängstlichen, fast pedantischen

---

Even if this does suggest that the narrator would welcome the end of Josefine's 'reign', it does not invalidate the sense of nostalgia for the *original* primitive age of which her singing is no more than a remnant. It is a recognition that that age is gone for ever.

[78]For a discussion of the comic elements in the story, see Pavel Petr, *Kafkas Spiele: Selbststiliserung und literarische Komik* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1992), p. 134ff.

[79]I am not convinced by Christian Goodden's argument that, because at the end of the story it is stated that 'das Volk wird den Verlust [von Josefine] überwinden' (Kafka, *Erzählungen*, p. 216), this is indicative of a 'positive existential alternative'. ('The Prospect of a Positive Existential Alternative', in Flores, p. 115). I should contend rather that this illustrates the poor quality of Josefine's singing in comparison with the 'Gesang' of the 'alten Zeiten'. As Deborah Harter comments, 'das Volk' 'are as heroic, or unheroic, as she ... and *as bound in the end for the same place in oblivion* [my emphasis]' ('The Artist on Trial: Kafka and Josefine, "die Sängerin"', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 61 (1987), 159).

Bestrebens, K. von dem Platz vor dem Hause wegzuschaffen.'[80]

This passage points in two different interpretative directions. On the more 'naturalistic' or 'realistic' level, an oppressed society is depicted where the most important thing is to live within the rules and where strangers are not trusted lest they interfere with the existing power structure. A 'naturalistic' reading however can only offer a partial view. Part of the reason for this is of course that the novel is only sometimes naturalistic, but there is more. When we considered the first generation of Buddenbrooks, we saw that Johann Senior and his contemporaries inhabited, somewhat complacently, a secure world in which metaphysical questions did not require to be asked. Perhaps what we see in this village community are the last vestiges of that *sort* of world, where people conform to a set of established norms. The distrust of others is thus the distrust of anything that challenges or disrupts that accepted mode of existence. It is a secure world, but there would appear to be a fear of asking questions or attempting to probe beneath the surface, perhaps lest that secure world prove to be a façade. (To probe beneath the surface is of course precisely K.'s intention.) Thus while it is difficult to be categorical about Kafka's presentation of the 'age of order', what can be asserted is that what absolute order there may once have been was characterised by a tyrannical authoritarianism, but there is nevertheless also a sense of a lost primitivity. Society, meanwhile, is ontologically more or less secure, but possibly only if such a subject is left well alone.

---

[80]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 19.

The Loss of Order

Since in Kafka's writing order is already lost, there is only limited space given to a the way that order has become lost. Nonetheless we are given veiled insights, and as well as *Das Schloß*, the short story *Der Jäger Gracchus* and the collection of aphorisms *Betrachtungen über Sünde, Leid, Hoffnung und den wahren Weg*, also unpublished in Kafka's lifetime, are also of relevance. It is with this topic that Kafka can begin to be seen as proceeding rather further along the road upon which Mann embarked with *Buddenbrooks*, both identifying similar issues and introducing new ones.

Some of the clear pointers towards the theme of the loss of order are to be found in the *Betrachtungen über Sünde, Leid, Hoffnung und den wahren Weg*. These aphorisms are a useful indicator of some of Kafka's opinions on metaphysical and spiritual matters[81]. On the other hand, like all of his work, they must be treated with caution. There are, for instance, some aphorisms which are playful and teasing[82], and additionally these aphorisms do not necessarily provide the key to everything else that he wrote. That said, they are still of considerable value. Number 36 is as follows:

> 'Früher begriff ich nicht, warum ich auf meine Frage keine Antwort bekam, heute begreife ich nicht, wie ich glauben konnte, fragen zu können. Aber ich glaubte ja gar nicht, ich fragte nur.'[83]

Perhaps the first thing that is noticeable about this aphorism is the use of the first person singular and a colloquial register. Considering the terse impersonality of Kafka's usual narrative style, this would seem to suggest that the thoughts expressed are rather closer to his own personal experience. While we cannot know for certain that this questioning is of an existential nature[84], the context, with its references to 'Welt', 'Himmel', 'Ewigkeit',

---

[81]In particular, these aphorisms concentrate, quite explicitly, on 'the Fall of Man' and 'der Kampf mit dem Bösen' (Helen Milfull, 'The Theological Position of Franz Kafka's Aphorisms', *Seminar*, 18 (1982), 170). See further Ritchie Robertson, 'Kafka's Zürau Aphorisms', *Oxford German Studies*, 14 (1983), especially 83.

[82]For example, number 16, 'Ein Käfig ging einen Vogel suchen' (Kafka, *Hochzeitsvorbereitungen*, p. 31).

[83]Kafka, *Hochzeitsvorbereitungen*, p. 33.

[84]The overall title given to the aphorisms is not however Kafka's own. (Kafka, *Hochzeitsvorbereitungen*, p.

'Gott', etc., would seem to be enough to point in that direction. This aphorism is above all an expression of doubt. Faith was not a part of this experience, only a vain questioning. The very fact that the object of the 'fragen' is not mentioned makes this doubt all the more far-reaching: anything is questioned, and there is an answer to nothing. Moreover, there are two different stages to this doubt: 'fragen' comes first, but, at the time of writing ('heute'), even the 'fragen' has lost its validity. This is one of Kafka's clearest expressions of a loss of faith.

These aphorisms are not always as personal as number 36; while this colloquial style largely persists, the first person singular is used only rarely. The aphorisms in the third person do however give statements which are rather wider and more general in scope. Aphorism 38 speaks very clearly of the loss of the Absolute. Unlike aphorism 36, 38 is much more explicit about its metaphysical significance:

> 'Einer staunte darüber, wie leicht er den Weg der Ewigkeit ging; er raste ihn nämlich abwärts.'[85]

The phrasing creates a humorous effect, but it is nevertheless very serious in its intent. This one sentence sums up a process which spanned three generations of Buddenbrooks, i.e., the decline from security and order into insecurity and disorder. Moreover, the imprecise pronoun 'einer' indicates that this is not an exclusive experience: it refers to no single person in particular, and therefore, while not necessarily a universal experience, it could be the experience of anyone. Unlike the Buddenbrooks, however, this process is very much faster: 'rasen' stresses how easily the individual can become divorced from the Absolute. Nevertheless, the individual is aware, like Jean and Thomas, of a metaphysical need: his awareness of his desire to go *towards* eternity makes him realise that his doubt is taking him in the opposite direction[86].

Metaphysical needs and doubts are not the only features of the loss of order. In

---

30, note 1.)

[85]Kafka, *Hochzeitsvorbereitungen*, p. 33.

[86]See further David M. Schur, 'Kafka's Way of Transcendence', *Seminar*, 30 (1994), 396.

Kafka's narrative writing, there is something of an inexorable process of disintegration. This is suggested obliquely by the phrase 'abwärts rasen' in the above aphorism, hinting at a momentum, which, once established, cannot be reversed. This is the predominant idea in *Josefine, die Sängerin* and *In der Strafkolonie*. How does Kafka express this idea? In the first place, oddly enough, by the sheer lack of analysis of the theme. A present situation is described which contrasts with the past, this past being viewed nostalgically. This gives an impression that human behaviour is not really the root cause of the change, instead lending a sense almost of inevitablility. In *Josefine, die Sängerin* this is suggested by the bald statement 'in den alten Zeiten unseres Volkes gab es Gesang'[87]: this bygone era is completely separate and divorced from the present age. Things have changed because the world is inherently different. *In der Strafkolonie* articulates this idea slightly differently: the camp officer is someone trying to resist change, but that change is outwith his control. The officer, after exhorting the visitor to the camp to take his side, is described in the following way:

> 'Und der Offizier faßte den Reisenden an beiden Armen und sah ihm schwer atmend ins Gesicht. Die letzten Sätze hatte er so geschrien, daß selbst der Soldat und der Verurteilte aufmerksam geworden waren;'[88]

The officer desperately attempts to cling to what he believes to be right. The situation is however changing. Very little attention is paid to the way it is changing: reference is made to the new commandant, but he is such a vague presence that the *process* appears as more dominant than any individual agent. However odious an order the officer might represent, despite the ambivalent attitude to it, and however much we might welcome its demise, nevertheless it does still illustrate that the old order is in inexorable decline.

There are also signs of the process of decline in *Das Schloß*. As we know, Kafka's writing emphasises the tyrannical and authoritarian sides of his images of order. Honegger traces the development of these images, observing that, in Kafka's later work, they are less powerful:

---

[87]Kafka, *Erzählungen*, p. 201.

[88]Kafka, *Erzählungen*, p. 169.

> 'In den früheren Werken des Dichters wird die dargestellte Macht in ihrer Berechtigung und unbeschränkten Gültigkeit gar nicht oder kaum in Frage gestellt und kritisiert; sie erfährt vorbehaltlose Anerkennung und Unterwerfung. Allmählich ist sie denn zunehmender Skepsis ausgesetzt und läßt den Leser und den Helden gleichermaßen im ungewissen, ob sie anzuerkennen oder abzulehnen sei.'[89]

Honegger argues that Kafka adopts a more ambivalent stance in his later work towards these images of order. It is not so much that they cease to be images of order, but rather that their status is called into question[90]. If we compare *Das Schloß* with an early story such as *Das Urteil*, we see that Honegger is quite correct: the father in that story has absolute authority, the son is totally subservient. The ordinary villagers in *Das Schloß*, however, while certainly submissive to the castle, do, with the exception of Barnabas and his family, live in a much less tense relationship with it than do Bendemann or Gregor Samsa with their respective fathers, for example[91]. They seem able to carry on their lives without interference from the castle. (The interference and upset come from K., not the castle.) While Honegger concentrates on the weakness of the castle itself, he hints at, but does not explicitly draw, a conclusion as far as the loss of order is concerned. The conclusion which may tentatively be drawn is that Kafka's *œuvre* itself suggests the process of an inevitable decline and loss of the Absolute. (Incidentally, while Georg Bendemann's father in *Das Urteil* is clearly not a symbol of transcendent order, there are very obvious parallels.) By weakening his various 'power structures' he questions the effectiveness of their influence on human life and suggests that there is a widening gulf between them and individual people.

The idea of a reappearance of a gap between the Absolute and humanity was one

---

[89]Jürg Beat Honegger, *Das Phänomen der Angst bei Franz Kafka* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1975), p. 332.

[90]Honegger does not suggest that the castle is of purely political or social significance.

[91]This is something frequently overlooked, especially for example by Rolf J. Goebel ('Kafka and Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*: Critique and Revision', *Journal of the Kafka Society of America*, 9 (1985), 79), who asserts that the protagonists are 'forever unable to fulfill' the 'overwhelming demands' of 'Georg's father, the court, the castle'. The castle, however, never *makes* any 'overwhelming demands', or, indeed, *any* demands on K. at all!

which was discussed in relation to *Buddenbrooks*[92]. Kafka develops this rather more fully in the short story *Der Jäger Gracchus*. This story concerns a hunter who has already died and who finds himself now locked into a directionless, limbo-like existence. He arrives on an apparently normal quay-side and proceeds to tell the 'Bürgermeister' of his predicament:

> '»Mein Todeskahn verfehlte die Fahrt, eine falsche Drehung des Steuers, ... ich weiß nicht, was es war, nur das weiß ich, daß ich auf der Erde blieb und daß mein Kahn seither die irdischen Gewässer befährt. So reise ich ... nach meinem Tode durch alle Länder der Erde.«
>
> »Und Sie haben keinen Teil am Jenseits?« fragte der Bürgermeister mit gerunzelter Stirne.
>
> »Ich bin«, antwortete der Jäger, »immer auf der großen Treppe, die hinaufführt.«'[93]

This story is an illustration of humanity's divorcement from eternity, and the ordered, comprehensible world of previous eras no longer seems to hold sway[94]. This is a metaphysical problem not dissimilar to Thomas Buddenbrook's, but more acute: whereas Thomas could not feel the influence or effect of God, Gracchus is more definitively excluded[95]. It is significant that Gracchus states that he is still *on earth*: this underscores the sense of the gulf by focussing on the material world. While there is still an idea that the Absolute exists, it is distant and remote. Gracchus is caught between the loss of order and a simultaneous yearning for and striving towards order[96].

---

[92]See above, p. 27.

[93]Kafka, *Beschreibung eines Kampfes*, p. 77.

[94]As Wilhelm Emrich says, it deals with a 'strange break with all defined order' (p. 8). Alwin L. Baum ('Parable as Paradox in Kafka's Stories', in *Franz Kafka*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1986), p. 166) argues that 'die Treppe' in the quotation is 'the stairway stretched between the planes of the literal and the figurative'. This can surely be no more than a secondary, hidden meaning. Frank Möbus' interpretation of Gracchus' plight as an 'adäquates Bild [Kafkas] vergeblichen Heiratsversuche' meanwhile is plausible in itself, but very restrictive ('Theoderich, Julia und die Jakobsleiter: Franz Kafkas Erzählfragmente zum *Jäger Gracchus*', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 109 (1990), 270).

[95]Ronald Speirs contends, from an analysis of the four fragments of the story, that there is evidence that it is Gracchus' own pride and arrogance which have caused him to be in this position ('Where there's a Will there's no Way. A Reading of Kafka's *Der Jäger Gracchus*', *Oxford German Studies*, 14 (1983), especially 104). If this is the case then it could also suggest something of the fallen state of humanity and thus underline the sense of being divorced from the Absolute.

[96]I find it difficult to accept Patrick Bridgwater's claim that *Der Jäger Gracchus* is 'the story of how the

It was demonstrated earlier that part of Thomas Buddenbrook's problem is the way in which he finds the world around him pointless[97]. This is paralleled in *Der Jäger Gracchus*, which ends with the following comment by Gracchus himself:

> '»Ich bin hier, mehr weiß ich nicht, mehr kann ich nicht tun. Mein Kahn ist ohne Steuer, er fährt mit dem Wind, der in den untersten Regionen des Todes bläst.«'[98]

This brings out particularly clearly the sense of a chaotic world. There is an acute sense of *personal* loss it is true, but here there is an additional factor: the 'Wind' which is 'in den untersten Regionen des Todes' has a generalising, almost mythical quality which suggests that the *world* is separated from order, not just the individual[99]. Furthermore, the individual is helpless: he knows nothing, he can do nothing. Thus the loss of order in Kafka's writing begins, as in *Buddenbrooks*, with the awareness of a metaphysical need and with doubt that that need can be met. Similarly, it ends with a picture of a chaotic world, and of the individual lost within that world. Additionally however there is a sense of inevitability in this loss of order: man loses sight of the Absolute because he can do no other.

"Dionysian Greek" of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* is reduced to impotence'. (*Kafka and Nietzsche* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1974), p. 123.) Even if there are deliberate echoes of Nietzsche here, it seems grossly overstated to suggest a link as direct as this.

[97]See above, p. 27.

[98]Kafka, *Beschreibung eines Kampfes*, p. 79.

[99]We should not lose sight of Kafka's own personal alienation which has inspired this, but at the same time it is surely intended to have a wider significance.

The Consequences of the Loss of Order

It is on the consequences of the loss of order that Kafka dwells, rather more than on the losing of it. It is perhaps in this area that Kafka's work is most famous, as an expression, above all, of alienation and ontological insecurity. Some of the consequences of that loss Mann has explored already, while there are also different ideas which Kafka explores. As far as style of presentation is concerned, Mann's characterisation of Thomas Buddenbrook is consonant with the realistic mode, exploring psychological realities and frequently using free indirect speech and interior monologue in order that we may understand the character as fully as possible. Kafka on the other hand uses a prose which is stark and unemotional and which does not dwell on psychology: the pain and suffering are no less real for Kafka's protagonists, but we are left to fill in the details for ourselves and complete a psychological picture which is only given in outline.

Rather than focussing on the individual's view of the world, it is worthwhile to turn to the presentation of the world itself. Kafka's mode of writing is not 'realistic', and there is one specific reason for this: it is in order to provide an artistic representation of a world which is seen as inherently senseless. *Blumfeld, ein älterer Junggeselle*, another story unpublished in Kafka's lifetime, illustrates this. This story is, by any standards, bizarre: it recounts how Blumfeld returns home one evening, disconsolate as a result of his lonely existence. When he enters his flat he finds two balls bouncing up and down, which then follow him around continually. The only way he can think of ridding himself of them is to give them to children, letting them collect them from his flat once he is out of sight. The story then shifts to Blumfeld's work, and the master-servant relationship he maintains with his subordinates. This is Blumfeld's reaction to the balls:

> 'Er kommt abends müde aus der Arbeit und nun, wo er Ruhe nötig hat, wird ihm diese Überraschung bereitet. ... Zerstören wird er ja die Bälle gewiß, und zwar in allernächster Zeit, aber vorläufig nicht und wahrscheinlich erst am nächsten Tag. Wenn man das Ganze unvoreingenommen ansieht, führen sich übrigens die Bälle genügend bescheiden auf.'[100]

---

[100]Kafka, *Beschreibung eines Kampfes*, pp. 114-5.

This situation is utterly ridiculous: it is impossible to take it seriously. What is far more peculiar than the balls themselves is the reaction of Blumfeld to them: their existence is no more than an 'Überraschung', and he is almost incredibly lethargic in his desire to dispose of them. This is all comic, but why write such a story? Blumfeld's world is apparently the real world, but the unreal happens in it. It deliberately makes no sense[101]. The comedy would appear to be a part of the same process of avoiding an emotional presentation of a world of chaos: we are held at an ironic distance which if anything makes the depiction all the clearer.

As far as Blumfeld's work environment is concerned, the relationships at the factory at which he works are unsatisfactory. This introduces an area of considerable importance: interpersonal relationships in Kafka's writing tend to be very poor[102]. Rather than dwelling on Blumfeld, however, it is preferable to turn to *Die Verwandlung*, where the impossible (Gregor Samsa's metamorphosis into a verminous insect) is presented with disturbing 'matter-of-factness'. What matters here however are the interpersonal relationships. In addition to Gregor's subservience to his superiors[103], the relationships within the Samsa family are noteworthy:

> '[Der Vater] ging ... mit verbissenem Gesicht auf Gregor zu. Er wußte wohl selbst nicht, was er vorhatte; immerhin hob er die Füße ungewöhnlich hoch, und Gregor staunte über die Riesengröße seiner Stiefelsohlen. ... Und so lief

---

[101]Heller speaks in a different context of 'an imaginative world ... in which the principle of sufficient cause is as good as abolished' (*Kafka* (London: Fontana, 1974), p. 27). Wilhelm Emrich (p. 124) on the other hand takes such a serious view of the balls in this story that he concludes that they are 'poetic indications of something universal'. This is surely a gross overstatement.

[102]Having discussed Blumfeld's character, I. A. and J. J. White conclude that 'far from being some form of alienated Everyman, Blumfeld is a very specific kind of person with definite shortcomings'. ('Blumfeld, an Elderly Bachelor', in Flores, p. 363.) This is certainly true up to a point, but the very fact that they say a '*kind* of person' rather than just 'a person' points again to the way in which Blumfeld is one specific illustration of life in a world which, as far as Kafka is concerned, is meaningless.

[103]For example:

> '»Aber Herr Prokurist«, rief Gregor außer sich und vergaß in der Aufregung alles andere, »ich mache ja sofort, augenblicklich auf. Ein leichtes Unwohlsein, ein Schwindelanfall, haben mich verhindert aufzustehen, usw.«'

(Kafka, *Erzählungen*, p. 65.)

er vor dem Vater her, stockte,'[104]

The relationship between father and son could not be worse: the father is overbearing, the son pathetically weak. (As a whole, *Die Verwandlung* could be summed up as the story of someone who is totally unfit for life.) The father-son relationship is not dissimilar to the Thomas-Hanno relationship[105] and is also typical of Kafka's father-son relationships[106], echoing Kafka's relationship with his tyrannical father. Because of this, it could be objected that such a relationship is not a consequence of a loss of order at all. This however is not the whole truth. Gregor Samsa becomes isolated from and rejected by *everyone* in his family, not just his father. This is represented by the three doors in his bedroom: whereas once they connected him with the rest of the flat and he could open and shut them when he pleased, after his metamorphosis they are locked from the outside, and he steadily becomes deprived of all human contact.

While the rest of the Samsa family stay together, in *Das Schloß* the picture of interpersonal relationships is rather bleaker. There is minimal reference to family life; Barnabas' family is the only one presented in any detail, and, while it is united in its misery, they are not particularly mutually supportive: after Barnabas' sister Amalia's refusal to accede to the official Sortini's request to go to him, presumably for his sexual gratification, the family is ostracised, but the others seek to regain the castle's favour. There is no question of their publicly defending her actions. Apart from that family, the other interpersonal relationships are characterised by a disunity which emphasises each individual's isolation. The following is from chapter two, when K. meets his so-called assistants Artur and Jeremias:

'»... ihr seid für mich ein einziger Mann.« Sie überlegten das und sagten: »Das wäre uns recht unangenehm.« — »Wie denn nicht«, sagte K., »natürlich muß euch das unangenehm sein, aber es bleibt so.«'[107]

---

[104]Kafka, *Erzählungen* p. 89.

[105]See above, p. 32.

[106]Another obvious example is *Das Urteil*. In that regard Heller (*Kafka*, p. 23) speaks of Bendemann's 'lasting helplessness in the face of his progenitor's tyrannical authority'.

[107]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 23.

K. demonstrates a callousness which can only alienate his present interlocutors[108]. Despite the fact that his acceptance of them as his assistants is no more than a charade (there is not even irrefutable evidence in the text to prove that K. is a *bona fide* 'Landvermesser'), he treats them with the disdain of a master ordering a servant. They are effectively no more than objects, for he does not even make the effort to distinguish one from the other. While this sort of behaviour is never analysed in terms of cause and effect, the fact that it is not limited to K. is evidence enough that it is a prominent feature of Kafka's chaotic world: Olga is treated like an object by the men in the inn[109], Frieda treats the same men like objects[110], the landlady of the 'Brückenhof' is abrasive towards K.[111], the schoolteacher is a tyrant, both towards K. and his assistants[112]: there is no sense of community, but rather a collection of disparate individuals.

Within the individual sphere, there is another consequence of the loss of order, and that is the concept of *Angst,* discussed philosophically most famously by Kierkegaard[113]. It is too complex to consider in detail here[114], but there is one aspect of it which is worthy of comment, concerning a statement which Kafka himself made in conversation with Gustav Janouch:

> 'Man fürchtet sich vor der Freiheit und Verantwortung. Darum erstickt man lieber hinter den selbst zusammengebastelten Gittern.'[115]

---

[108]K.'s callousness is emphasised by the fact that the two assistants are child-like and comic in their behaviour, and thus undeserving of his brutality. (I disagree with Claude David's assessment of them that they are 'ein Bild der absoluten Nichtigkeit', 'Kafka und das Groteske', *Études Germaniques,* 43 (1988), 114.)

[109]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 41.

[110]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 42.

[111]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, pp. 54-5.

[112]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, pp. 127-30.

[113]See above, p. 8. It should however be borne in mind that, while Kierkegaard finds a solution to *Angst* in religious faith, there is for Kafka 'keinen Ausweg aus dem Ungenügen an sich selbst und an der Welt' (Bert Nagel, *Kafka und die Weltliteratur: Zusammenhänge und Wechselwirkungen* (München: Winkler, 1983), p. 293).

[114]For a very thorough analysis of the topic, see Honegger, *passim.*

[115]Gustav Janouch, *Gespräche mit Kafka: Aufzeichnungen und Erinnerungen* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1968), p. 44. Quoted in Honegger, p. 197.

This idea of fear of 'Freiheit und Verantwortung' has much in common with the Kierkegaardian definition of *Angst* and is most revealing for what it tells us about stories such as *Die Verwandlung*[116] where the metamorphosis can be interpreted as a defence against Gregor's existence, forced to do a job he hates in order to support his family. When Kafka writes stories about characters who are feeble and inadequate, the trend is towards the avoidance of life's demands and commitment to any radical choice. Is it legitimate to include this as one of the consequences of the loss of order? The objection can be raised that this is an individual psychological problem (not all of Kafka's characters are like this), but these individuals lack confidence because they have no psychological 'centre of gravity'. Their building of walls (literal or metaphorical) is representative of a need for ontological security.

There is one final consequence which is perhaps the inevitable result of all these various other existential problems. While this probably became rather more prominent amongst writers after Kafka, nevertheless it is one which Kafka does broach, although not in any detailed way. This issue is the problem of individual identity, where the sense of ontological disorientation is such that a degree of uncertainty arises about one's own distinctive individual identity. This arises in *Das Schloß*: the most important character in the novel is only referred to as 'K.'. For all the importance his behaviour and attitudes have in the book, he is effectively nameless[117]. This robs him of some of his individuality.

---

[116]Another example would be *Der Bau*, where the creature protagonist devotes its entire existence to barricading itself in and preventing any incursion of the outside world (although it is forever tormented by a threatening noise which infiltrates its burrow). (Fritz Billeter (*Das Dichterische bei Kafka und Kierkegaard: Ein typologischer Vergleich* (Winterthur: P. G. Keller, 1965), p. 115) comments in general terms that *Angst* 'vom Unbestimmt-Drohenden, vom Vorgestellt-Möglichen, aus der Zukunft Entgegenkommenden erzeugt wird'. Clearly that would describe very well the situation of the creature of *Der Bau* tormented by the unidentified noise.) Hermann Pongs calls this story 'die Idylle als Labyrinth', but, while he mentions 'den Daseinsschreck', fails in my opinion to take sufficient account of the *Angst* which pervades the entire story (*Franz Kafka: Dichter des Labyrinths* (Heidelberg: Wolfgang Rothe, 1960), p. 95).

Henry Sussman meanwhile draws interesting parallels between the 'fissures within [the burrow's] architecture' and the enigmatic nature of Kafka's writing, where 'the construction opens itself at every stratum' (*Franz Kafka: Geometrician of Metaphor* (Madison: Coda Press, 1979), p. 158).

[117]The incomplete nature of the novel does mean that 'K.' might only be a shorthand for the manuscript, although this objection is countered at least partially by the fact that all the other characters do have names.

Perhaps even more interesting than this is a feature that appears from time to time in Kafka's personal diary, and that is the way he at times adopts an *alter ego* who addresses him as 'du'. The following extract from March, 1914, relates to his considering going to Berlin:

> 'Du bist aber verwöhnt.
> Nein, ich brauche ein Zimmer und vegetarische Pension, sonst fast nichts.
> Fährst du nicht F.s wegen hin?
> Nein, ich wähle Berlin nur aus den obigen Gründen, allerdings liebe ich es wegen F. und wegen des Vorstellungskreises um F., das kann ich nicht kontrollieren.'[118]

This demonstrates a total inability to come to a decision. The author challenges himself with the various factors which have a bearing on the situation. What is of particular importance is that he assumes two different rôles *within his own mind*: there can be no definite, secure, personal identity where a person feels the need to project some of his feelings and attitudes on to another persona. Furthermore, the other persona is continually questioning him[119]: there is something deeply unsettling about this 'other voice' within him. In this way we can sum up by asserting that the world for Kafka is a chaotic one. The age of order is in the past, the loss of order inevitable, and the consequences of that loss manifold: a loss of direction, a world where events make no sense, relationships are disintegrating, individuals can become victims of anxiety, even individual identity can come into question. If Kafka's and Mann's writing are taken together, finally, they can actually point towards the work of one whose existence was continually beset by despair in the face of chaos: Luis Cernuda.

---

[118]Kafka, *Tagebücher*, p. 269.

[119]'Was willst du also tun? ... Den Posten verlassen? ... Was willst du tun?' (Kafka, *Tagebücher*, p. 268.)

Luis Cernuda

The Existential-Metaphysical Significance of Cernuda's Poetry

While the most common theme in *La realidad y el deseo* is love and erotic interest, and while Cernuda's poetry may with some justification be summed up as expressing a 'thirst for eternity'[120], both of these concepts tend to oversimplify his creative output, for they tie the existential significance of the poetry too closely to the erotic significance. While at its most basic level Cernuda's poetry tells of the problems when the dream of desire ('deseo') encounters 'la realidad', it is worth considering at the outset the extent to which Cernuda's poetry expresses a more general world-view.

The erotic impulse predominates in Cernuda's first collection, *Primeras Poesías*, which is concerned with the experiences of Cernuda's adolescent persona, as is the second collection *Égloga, Elegía, Oda*. (The experiences of maturity form the core of the third collection onwards.) Despite this, there are suggestions of a more profound significance which the young poet sees in the adolescent experiences, and this is a preparation for the later poetry, where there is a development from viewing desire in existential terms towards more specifically existential and metaphysical concerns *per se*. Poem VII of *Primeras Poesías* is at first sight a typical example of Cernuda's poetry of adolescence: an unfulfilled erotic impulse, combined with a sense of confinement, indolence and alienation[121]. The wording of the closing stanza of the poem is however of

---

[120]Philip W. Silver, *Et in Arcadia Ego: A Study of the Poetry of Luis Cernuda* (London: Tamesis, 1965), p. 27.

[121]The first two stanzas are as follows:

'Existo, bien lo sé,
Porque le transparenta
El mundo a mis sentidos
Su amorosa presencia.

Mas no quiero estos muros,
Aire infiel a sí mismo,
Ni esas ramas que cantan
En el aire dormido.'

(Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, Vol. I of *Obra completa*, ed. Derek Harris and Luis Maristany (Madrid:

considerable significance:

> 'Soy memoria de hombre;
> Luego, nada. Divinas,
> La sombra y la luz siguen
> Con la tierra que gira.'[122]

While the sense of alienation is obvious, nevertheless these lines are very profound, for there is a faint echo of Platonic concepts. In Platonic terms, 'The soul before birth ... was acquainted with the world of Ideas; knowledge of the Ideas in this life is achieved through the soul's recollection of what it has previously known'[123]. There could be an echo of this in the line 'Soy memoria de hombre'. In addition, the phrases 'Divinas,/La sombra y la luz siguen/Con la tierra que gira' lend a kind of cosmic or universal dimension, where there is a split between the world and the person. If light and shadow are 'divine', then they could represent that world of Ideas which the persona can only recollect. Thus the *world* appears more ordered at this stage, but the *persona* has no access to this order[124]. (Furthermore, this proves to a be a very temporary perception.) While no more than an evocation, these lines do nonetheless demonstrate the beginnings of the expression of Cernuda's world-view[125].

It is with the third collection, *Un río, un amor*, that the way in which Cernuda expresses his world-view begins to become clear. While it is certainly true that this collection and the fourth, *Los placeres prohibidos* (both influenced by Surrealism), were

---

Ediciones Siruela, 1993-4), p. 111. All subsequent references will be to this edition. For convenience, only the title of the relevant volume will subsequently be given.

[122]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 112.

[123]*The Concise Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, ed. Margaret C. Howatson and Ian Chilvers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 429. See also Mary Margaret McCabe, *Plato's Individuals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 265. I am indebted to Professor D. G. Walters for this suggestion.

[124]J. M. Aguirre suggests further that there appears to be something 'imperturbable' about the world itself ('La poesía primera de Luis Cernuda', *Hispanic Review*, 34 (1966), p. 127).

[125]Terence McMullan informs us that 'Soy memoria de hombre' also recalls a Reverdy poem 'Mémoire d'homme', but that Cernuda 'makes a metaphor of it', but gives no explanation of this metaphor ('Luis Cernuda and the Emerging Influence of Pierre Reverdy', *Revue de littérature comparée*, 49 (1975), 138).

written as the result of a disastrous amatory experience[126], they are nevertheless not limited to this. 'Decidme anoche', in *Un río, un amor*, gives a clear expression in the early poetry to the existential significance which Cernuda deems the failed amatory experience to have. The opening stanza is as follows:

> 'La presencia del frío junto al miedo invisible
> Hiela a gotas oscuras la sangre entre la niebla,
> Entre la niebla viva, hacia la niebla vaga
> Por un espacio ciego de rígidas espinas.'[127]

The emotional torment which pervades these Surrealist-influenced poems is instantly apparent: there is an acute sense of distress, conveyed in extreme terms. The freezing of the blood, symbol of life itself, creates a sense of death, and the only thing said to be alive is the 'niebla', heightening the sense of unreality about the persona's existence. Furthermore, there is a preponderance of words denoting dimness and darkness, creating an atmosphere of gloom. The persona himself however has only the vaguest presence in this opening stanza: 'miedo' and 'sangre' are the only two elements which suggest his existence. This vagueness has the effect of creating an abstraction; it draws the poem away from the specific and towards a more general statement about humanity. The human presence then does become more explicit in the second stanza but in the form of the generalised 'los hombres'. The specificity is then reduced again, and the fourth stanza is particularly significant:

> 'El dolor también busca, errante entre la noche,
> Tras la sombra fugaz de algún gozo indefenso;
> Y sus pálidos pasos callados se entrelazan,
> Incesante fantasma con mirada de hastío.'[128]

This stanza has a complex grammatical construction. The subject of the verb 'busca' in line one is postponed until line four ('Incesante fantasma'). This intensifies the

---

[126]See Derek Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study of the Poetry* (London: Tamesis, 1973), p. 34.

[127]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 148.

[128]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 149.

generalising tendency operating within this poem. All that we are told is that 'something' is seeking 'dolor': this lifts the poem out of the particular situation of Cernuda's despair. When we finally encounter the subject, this generalising process is continued, because it is a vague 'fantasma': we are now explicitly invited to assume that Cernuda perceives this experience as having a significance beyond the circumstances of one individual. In addition, these lines convey a sense of disorientation, especially with the word 'errante'. There is also a supra-human level in this poem, and a greater indication of this appears two stanzas later:

> 'Sí, la tierra está sola; a solas canta, habla,
> Con una voz tan débil que no la alcanza el cielo;
> Canta risas o plumas atravesando espacio
> Bajo un sol calcinante reflejado en la arena.'[129]

There is a vivid picture of a world divorced from the harmonious, transcendent order which once held sway. These lines are without doubt the climax of the process of generalisation which we have already seen, moving from the tortured individual at the outset to a vision of the whole world. Just as in *Buddenbrooks* and *Das Schloß* the social and existential/metaphysical spheres are present in the text simultaneously[130], in *La realidad y el deseo* it is predominantly the *erotic* and existential/metaphysical spheres which are present together. (The social sphere is of much less importance in Cernuda's writing.) While there are occasions when the language is indicative of two different interpretations, what happens more often in this poetry is that, in poems where both elements are present, the contemplation of the erotic leads to a contemplation of the world. Thus Cernuda tends to be much more explicitly existential than either Mann or Kafka. Furthermore, in some of the later poetry, when Cernuda was in exile (most especially collections VII, *Las Nubes,* and VIII, *Como quien espera el alba*), the erotic theme all but disappears altogether, with poems which deal exclusively with the problems of man's existence and his relationship to the Absolute. Thus while the importance of the existential significance of the erotic experience cannot be stressed enough, it is important

---

[129]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 149.

[130]See above, pp. 14ff and 38f.

to be aware that those later poems in which existential matters are of primary importance are but a development and intensification of traits already in evidence in the earlier poetry.

The Age of Order

Cernuda, like Kafka, starts out from the premise that the universe is without order. This does not however mean that there is no indication of a bygone era of order. From the outset, it would appear that Cernuda has more in common with Kafka than with Mann as far as the presentation of the age of order is concerned, and to a certain extent this is indeed the case. This does not however exclude Cernuda's poetry from having certain thematic points of contact with Mann's work, although it must be borne in mind that, within this area of concern, there will be less scope for comparison.

In common with Kafka, there is in Cernuda's poetry a note of nostalgia for something gone, but also a stronger sense of a 'Romantic' yearning for the past. What is more, when Cernuda looks towards the age of order and more specifically belief in absolute order, there is never conjured up an image as tyrannical and repulsive as Kafka's 'Strafkolonie'. His image is always much more positive, contrasting starkly with the chaos of the modern world. It is a theme which is explored in particular in the poetry of *Invocaciones*, which shows a marked influence of Friedrich Hölderlin. In the last poem of the collection, 'A las estatuas de los dioses', Cernuda makes use of Hölderlin's image of the gods of Antiquity. The opening of the poem is concerned primarily with what that bygone era was like:

> 'Hermosas y vencidas soñáis,
> Vueltos los ciegos ojos hacia el cielo,
> Mirando las remotas edades
> De titánicos hombres,
> Cuyo amor os daba ligeras guirnaldas
> Y la olorosa llama se alzaba
> Hacia la luz divina, su hermana celeste.
>
> Reflejo de vuestra verdad, las criaturas
> Adictas y libres como el agua iban;'[131]

[131]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 246.

The sense of nostalgia is very strong (*Invocaciones* is probably the most overtly 'Romantic' of all the collections of *La realidad y el deseo*[132]), but what is of greater importance is the vision of this longed-for era itself. First, it is 'remote': since the loss of order has already taken place, it is a world to which the persona has no access. Second, this is a 'Golden Age': Cernuda is describing a mythical world, expressed especially in the phrase 'titánicos hombres'. In addition, this mythical world seems to be a paradise, speaking of 'amor' and 'luz divina' (which contrasts with the 'delirio sombrío' of this world at the end of the second stanza). Moreover, the opening lines of the second stanza refer not just to the 'dioses' but also to the 'criaturas': in this former age of order individuals lived in security and harmony[133]. The choice of epithets linked to 'criaturas' is also striking: while 'libres' is a positive quality, the significance of 'adictas' is less immediately apparent, especially since there appears to be nothing in particular to which they might be 'adictas'. Does it suggest a state of near-intoxication with this idyll of which they (and by extension also Cernuda's dreaming persona) are a part? While the sense of security is vaguely reminiscent of the first generation of Buddenbrooks[134] and of *Das Schloß*[135], the mythical ideas have more in common with *Josefine, die Sängerin*[136], although they are much more explicit in 'A las estatuas de los dioses'. Further, whereas in both *Buddenbrooks* and *Das Schloß* it only took a little reflection or a little probing to

---

[132]While Cernuda's poetry frequently has much in common with Romantic ideas, I think it is an oversimplification to suggest that 'Cernuda also fits M. H. Abrams' romantic paradigm more perfectly than any previous "romantic" poet' (Silver, 'Cernuda and Spanish Romanticism: Prolegomena to a Genealogy', *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 43 (1990), 112). See also Silver, *De la mano de Cernuda: Invitación a la poesía* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1989) for a longer discussion of the same topic, as well as Robert K. Newman, 'Luis Cernuda: El hombre visto a través de su poesía', *Ínsula*, Año 19, No. 207 (1964), 6), and Rafael Argullol, 'Cernuda romántico', *Quimera*, 15-I-1982, pp. 29-32. One of the things which this study aims to show is that not only does Cernuda's poetry break the boundaries of a 'romantic paradigm', but that the use of any literary 'pigeonhole' is unhelpful for such complex poetry. Incidentally, even in this collection, Agustín Delgado recognises that Cernuda is 'mucho más moderno que Hölderlin', noting in particular the 'soledad ... radical', although again his term 'neoromántico' may equally be too restrictive (*La poética de Luis Cernuda* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1975), p. 179).

[133]Salvador Jiménez-Fajardo (*Luis Cernuda* (Boston: Twayne, 1978), p. 48, describes it as a 'state of grace'. While Harris (*Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 71) is right to say that this was an age 'when love was still possible', this is perhaps rather limiting; 'titánicos hombres' for example demonstrates that there is more than just love at issue here.

[134]See above, p. 18.

[135]See above, p. 44.

[136]See above, p. 42.

reveal the fragility of that state, Cernuda here looks back to when it was genuine. The irony is that it is only genuine in a mythical world.

In the second stanza of this poem Cernuda expresses succinctly his perception of this age of order. The strands of thought in the opening lines (the gods and their effect on the community) are brought together in the last two lines of this second stanza:

> 'En vosotros [los dioses] creían [las criaturas] y vosotros existíais;
> La vida no era un delirio sombrío.'[137]

The concept of faith highlights the fundamental difference between the mythical era and the modern one: the world was ordered because the world in general believed in the Absolute (or more accurately in a number of beings whose confluence and mutual interaction formed the Absolute). That faith allows the gods to affect the world ('vosotros existíais'): without it they effectively disappear. Thus, while the nostalgia has something in common with the *attitudes* of the officer in *In der Strafkolonie*, it is a much more overtly religious vision, although it is only this religiosity and not the nature of the religion itself which bears a resemblance with *Buddenbrooks*. This, in Cernuda's poetry, is more of a superficial contrast: Cernuda tends to be rather vague and indiscriminate about matters of faith. In *Las Nubes* he addresses the Christian God in 'La visita de Dios', which is followed by 'Resaca en Sansueña', which deals in part with a pagan god of Antiquity[138]. Furthermore, when the search for absolute order comes to be undertaken, the goal is specifically Christian[139]. This suggests that the age of order is for Cernuda not as far away from *Buddenbrooks* as an initial reading might suggest, although care should be taken not to exaggerate the similarities at this stage.

When looking towards a former ordered universe, Cernuda's vision is not limited to specifically religious concepts. Where there is a much greater degree of convergence

---

[137]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 246.

[138]See also Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 79.

[139]See for example 'La visita de Dios' (*Poesía completa*, pp. 274-7), 'Cordura' (pp. 284-6), 'Atardecer en la catedral' (pp. 282-4).

with some of Kafka's work, and with for example *Josefine, die Sängerin*, is in the depiction of a lost primitivity, of an era lacking the 'sophistication' of the modern world (in the sense in which 'to sophisticate' means 'to deprive (a person or thing) of its natural simplicity'[140]). While this has something in common with the mythical world already discussed, there are subtle differences. In the second collection *Égloga, Elegía, Oda*, what is predominant is the image of a primitive paradise. The 'Égloga' describes an idyllic pastoral vision. The seventh stanza is pivotal:

'Idílico paraje
De dulzor tan primero,
Nativamente digno de los dioses.
Mas ¿qué frío celaje
Se levanta ligero,
En cenicientas ráfagas veloces?
Unas secretas voces
Este júbilo ofenden
Desde gris lontananza;
Con estéril pujanza
Otras pasadas primaveras tienden,
Hasta la que hoy respira,
Una tierna fragancia que suspira.'[141]

The overriding impression of these lines is one of the paradise. More important than this is the adjective in line two, namely 'primero': this is an evocation of an Edenic, *primeval* age where the world is beautiful and harmonic in its newness[142]. While Kafka only suggests this in *Josefine, die Sängerin* without exploring it very deeply, Cernuda devotes some time to a description of it, and, while there is a reference in line three to 'los dioses', it is not a semi-religious poem in the vein of 'A las estatuas de los dioses': rather, the reference here emphasises the picture of primeval splendour. A slightly discordant note is however sounded in line four with the reference to a 'frío celaje'. At this point the

---

[140]*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, ed. R. E. Allen, 8th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 1160.

[141]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 131.

[142]As Catherine C. Bellver remarks, all the poems of this collection 'radiate a sense of suspended serenity identifiable with a young man still untouched by loss and failure' ('Luis Cernuda's Paragons of Mythical Beauty', *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 43 (1990), 33).

question of nostalgia starts to come into play once again. It is a vision of an age of primitive order, certainly, but it is no more than a vision, and as the poem draws to a close it is the contrast between the vision and present reality which comes to the fore:

> 'Silencio. Ya decrecen
> Las luces que lucían.
> ...
> ¿Y qué invisible muro
> Su frontera más triste
> Gravemente levanta?
> El cielo ya no canta,
> Ni su celeste eternidad asiste
> A la luz y las rosas,
> Sino al horror nocturno de las cosas.'[143]

The suggestion of the close of the day underlines that this vision is definitively over and that the persona who imagined it is returning to his own world. The three-line question provides an image of confinement, reminiscent of *Primeras Poesías*, the 'invisible muro' cutting the persona off from the natural world of which he could only dream he was a part. At this point the nostalgia is again particularly evident. The closing four lines however add a further dimension. Ostensibly these lines refer to the darkness of nightfall, but, in his choice of the words 'cielo' and 'celeste eternidad', Cernuda points towards an almost metaphysical significance. This effectively combines the ideas of primitivity and an ordered universe into the one vision with the result that, while there is a certain similarity of concept with both Mann and Kafka, Cernuda has gone much further, creating a whole world, in dream, which is not available in reality. This is suggestive of an evasive, escapist tendency which both Mann and Kafka treat with some considerable caution, even irony and scepticism. This does not however mean that Cernuda does not know what reality is: the lack of involvement of the 'cielo' and the 'celeste eternidad' at the end of the 'Égloga' are an indication of the separation between humanity and eternity[144], and it is the way that the two have become separated for Cernuda and his

---

[143]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 132.

[144]Manuel Ballestero discusses the whole of *Égloga, Elegía, Oda*, finding evidence that there is 'demasiada consciencia para dejarle [a Cernuda] sucumbir o a una atemporal ingenuidad restauradora o a una exquisitez

personae that will form the next stage in our analysis.

esteticista; sabe que los «modelos» ni se prolongan ni se repiten' (*Poesía y reflexión: La palabra en el tiempo* (Madrid: Taurus, 1980), p. 120).

The Loss of Order

The connections between Mann and Kafka on the one hand and Cernuda on the other are admittedly fairly limited as far as the age of order is concerned. This picture does however change with the issue of the loss of order. Certainly there is no straightforward presentation of a decline from order into chaos as there is in *Buddenbrooks* (this is partly inevitable, given Cernuda's status as a predominantly lyrical poet), but nonetheless different literary themes from *both* Mann and Kafka find their counterparts in *La realidad y el deseo*.

One of the differences between the first two generations of Buddenbrooks is their attitude to man's position and rôle in nature, where Johann Senior sees himself as above it but his son has 'nicht das mindeste Recht über die Natur'[145]. While this is only a minor point, nevertheless Cernuda shares a more humble viewpoint vis-à-vis the natural world. The natural world reappears spasmodically throughout *La realidad y el deseo*, and the attitudes towards it tend to be fairly similar (although this is not always the case). The predominant emphasis is on the positive, secure, vibrant quality which nature is seen to possess[146]. The following are the first three stanzas of poem I of *Primeras Poesías*:

'Va la brisa reciente
Por el espacio esbelta,
Y en las hojas cantando
Abre una primavera.

Sobre el límpido absimo
Del cielo se divisan,
Como dichas primeras,

---

[145]See above, p. 24.

[146]See for example Andrew P. Debicki, *Estudios sobre poesía española contemporánea. La generación de 1924-1925* (Madrid: Gredos, 1968), p. 296, and also Silver, 'Cernuda, poeta ontológico', in *Luis Cernuda*, ed. Harris, p. 210.
There are however also times when nature loses its vitality, e.g.:

'Cuán lejano todo. Muertas
Las rosas que ayer abrieran,'

(Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 115.)

Primeras golondrinas.

Tan sólo un árbol turba
La distancia que duerme,
Así el fervor alerta
La indolencia presente.'[147]

There is one fundamental tenet common to both Cernuda's poetry and *Buddenbrooks* as far as nature is concerned: nature has it own, confident existence, independent of humanity. Johann Buddenbrook Senior wants to create a formal garden because man is above nature; neither his son nor Cernuda's persona share that conviction. Nature in this poem has had complete freedom to grow in harmony with itself. In fact, the human presence is not even mentioned until the last line, and even then is only a vague 'él'. The significance of this as far as the loss of order is concerned is equally clear: the elements of an *ordered* universe are dependent upon a hierarchy, with the Absolute at the pinnacle of that hierarchy. The diminution of man's status in the universe hints that that hierarchy no longer applies[148], and, while nature here is certainly in harmony, the world view may not be theocentric.

Of far greater importance for a discussion of the loss of order is the theme of doubt. In the poem 'A las estatuas de los dioses', the key-note of the bygone 'Golden Age' is the faith of the 'criaturas'. One of the most telling steps in the decline from order into chaos is when faith disintegrates. It is relevant to return to a stanza of 'Decidme anoche' quoted earlier[149]:

'Sí, la tierra está sola; a solas canta, habla,

---

[147]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 107.

[148]There are occasions when Cernuda's view of nature can border on the pantheistic. (See for example 'El viento de septiembre entre los chopos' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 111-2) or 'Jardín' (pp. 200-1).) The persona can also however be isolated and alienated from that natural world. (See for example 'El árbol' (pp. 248-50).) These two strands, combined with the fact noted above that nature is not exclusively positive, suggests that, while it tends to enjoy far more elevated status in *La realidad y el deseo* than in *Buddenbrooks*, it cannot on the whole be taken as an *Absolute* in itself, but instead more of a highly romanticised vision which has a reasonable amount in common with the attitude of Jean Buddenbrook.

[149]See above, p. 60.

Con una voz tan débil que no la alcanza el cielo;
Canta risas o plumas atravesando espacio
Bajo un sol calcinante reflejado en la arena.'[150]

For Cernuda, the earth, and thus all those on it, is now alone. Humans only have each other with whom to communicate and their efforts to reach out to another realm are feeble and ineffective. (The fact of Cernuda's failure in human relationships which inspired *Un río, un amor* makes the poem all the more tragic.) In addition, while the phrase 'Canta risas o plumas' could sound optimistic, the sense of a lack of ultimate order to the universe prevails[151], as can be seen in the closing stanza of the poem:

'Se detiene la sangre por los miembros de piedra
Como al coral sombrío fija el mar enemigo,
Como coral helado en el cuerpo deshecho,
En la noche sin luz, en el cielo sin nadie.'[152]

The reference to 'sangre' in line one, and the adjective 'helado' in line three remind us of the negative imagery of the opening stanza. Despite the fact that a love relationship inspired the poem, it finishes with the metaphysical image that, as the night sky is devoid of light[153] (with its positive connotations of understanding, enlightenment, etc.), so the sky (or 'heaven') is devoid of people. If we compare this with Thomas Buddenbrook, then this is effectively a poetic and emotional evocation of the metaphysical doubt which, together with his awareness of his mortality, precipitates his spiritual crisis. If we compare this with Kafka, then it would certainly be a 'cielo sin nadie' that would provide 'keine Antwort' to his 'fragen'[154].

---

[150]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 149.

[151]See also Richard K. Curry, 'Between Platonism and Modernity: The Double "Fall" in the Poetry of Luis Cernuda', in *The Word and the Mirror: Critical Essays on the Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, ed. Salvador Jiménez-Fajardo (Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1989), p. 122.

[152]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 150.

[153]Shelley A. De Laurentis also comments in general terms how 'sombra' and darkness in Cernuda represent 'los aspectos múltiples de la realidad' ('Luz y sombra en la poesía de Cernuda', *Sin Nombre*, 6, No. 4 (1976), 15).

[154]See above, p. 45.

In addition to the scepticism of 'Decidme anoche', there is an idea of a notional existence of God or some kind of Absolute, but that (contrary to the Christian message), there is once more a gulf between the Absolute and humanity. This is illustrated in the last stanza of the meditation on the gods of Antiquity, 'A las estatuas de los dioses'. (It will be recalled that at this stage Cernuda does not really distinguish between the gods of Antiquity and the Christian God[155].) The closing stanza of this poem deals, not with the former age of order as the rest of the poem, but with the persona's present world:

'En tanto el poeta, en la noche otoñal,
Bajo el blanco embeleso lunático,
Mira las ramas que el verdor abandona
Nevarse de luz beatamente,
Y sueña con vuestro trono de oro
Y vuestra faz cegadora,
Lejos de los hombres,
Allá en la altura impenetrable.'[156]

The persona gazes into the night, his vision over, realising that there is only the sky and nature, beautiful though they undeniably are. What Absolute there is, or may have been, is by contrast entirely separate and divorced from the human sphere ('Lejos de los hombres'). There is no means of perceiving them, for where they reign is 'impenetrable'. This may be compared with Kafka's *Der Jäger Gracchus* where Gracchus is separated from the world beyond, trying to aim in that direction and yet irrevocably earth-bound. As for Thomas Buddenbrook, the objection could be raised that the gulf relates to Thomas' doubt that God can help in time of need. However, this idea is *also* visible in *La realidad y el deseo*, as is illustrated by 'La visita de Dios' from *Las Nubes*. The bulk of this poem is given over to expressions of the persona's metaphysical despair, but what is relevant at this juncture is the following direct address to God in the last stanza:

'Compadécete al fin, escucha este murmullo
Que ascendiendo llega como una ola
Al pie de tu divina indiferencia.'[157]

---

[155]See above, p. 64.

[156]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 247-8.

The persona has been deserted by God and made to dwell a stranger (Cernuda is literally in exile) without prospect of mercy[158]. While we should be careful not to make too much of this poem under this heading of the loss of order, since it was written under rather different circumstances (at the outset of Cernuda's search for absolute order), nevertheless it is worth noting that the gulf between the Absolute and humanity does encompass both humanity's inability to penetrate the realms of the Absolute (as in Kafka) and God's apparent inability or disinclination to intervene in humanity's distress (as in Mann).

We have so far concentrated on the individual's world-view and the relationship (or more accurately the non-relationship) between individuals and the Absolute. One further dimension which is apparent, albeit to a relatively limited extent, is the status of the world itself. The eighth poem of *Donde habite el olvido* is especially relevant in this regard. While this poem is also influenced by the disastrous amatory experience, nevertheless the terms in which the poem is couched illustrate that it is intended to have a wider significance:

'Ya no es vida ni muerte
El tormento sin nombre,
Es un mundo caído
Donde silba la ira.

Es un mar delirante,
Clamor de todo espacio,
Voz que de sí levanta
Las alas de un dios póstumo.'[159]

Only a knowledge of the biographical background to this poem indicates that the amatory

---

[157]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 276.

[158]In another context Jiménez-Fajardo speaks of Cernuda's 'refusal to believe in a personal God at all involved with mankind' (*Luis Cernuda*, p. 56).

[159]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 207.

experience is the basic theme[160]. The poem effectively works on two levels. The significance of this poem as far as the love theme is concerned will be discussed much later. At this stage it is relevant to take the metaphysical import into account[161]. Not only has the individual lost contact with absolute order, the world itself has as well. It is, in its own right, senseless and without direction (and thus far away from the more ordered picture of the world in *Primeras Poesías*). Furthermore, the last line explicitly links this to the loss of the Absolute with the rather Nietzschean-sounding 'dios póstumo'. Again we are reminded of Mann and the meaningless 'Lärm und Stimmengewirr' to which Thomas is but an alienated bystander[162], and, even more noticeably, to Kafka and Gracchus' boat, blown by the 'Wind' of the 'untersten Regionen des Todes'[163]. In addition, the 'mundo caído' and 'dios póstumo', taken together, are possibly suggestive of the fatalistic inevitability of the loss of order which is part of Kafka's depiction of the theme. Thus Cernuda's poetry illustrates significant strands present in both Mann's and Kafka's writing: man's position in nature, metaphysical chaos, the gulf between the Absolute and humanity. The greatest similarity of all of course is that order is gone. The consequences of that change in world view must now become the centre of this discussion.

---

[160]Even the lines 'Los condenados tuercen/Sus cuerpos' from the third stanza (*Poesía completa*, p. 206) are not proof: the reference could be to individuals on their *own*, not necessarily together.

[161]Harris (*Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 55) is very restrictive in his interpretation when he says that there is 'little presence of exterior reality'. Charles Christopher Soufas, Jr., in turn suggests the 'dios póstumo' 'could also refer to that other, more significant self into which Cernuda desired to be transformed' ('Agents of Power in the Poetry of Luis Cernuda', Diss. Duke 1979, p. 155. Cernuda encapsulates an *entire world view* into these few lines.

[162]See above, p. 27.

[163]See above, p. 50. Is Gracchus too on a 'mar delirante'?

The Consequences of the Loss of Order

Cernuda was an extremely sensitive person, and a highly emotional response to a sense of existential chaos is replicated over a whole series of poems. In his poetry, the loss of order affects the world in general, not just the individual. An almost inevitable concomitant of this situation is that events in the world appear without sense and logical order. While care should be taken to avoid exaggerating this idea in *La realidad y el deseo*, there is nevertheless a certain extent to which it is true, above all in the two collections influenced by Surrealism (although Cernuda's use of that movement is not extreme), *Un río, un amor* and *Los placeres prohibidos*. While always influenced by amatory disappointment, there are times in these collections when the reference to that disappointment is so oblique that it is very little in evidence. One such example is the poem 'El caso del pájaro asesinado' from *Un río, un amor*, which is a striking picture of a chaotic world where events take place without logical motivation:

'Fue un pájaro quizá asesinado;
Nadie sabe. Por nadie
O por alguien quizá triste en las piedras,
En los muros del cielo.

Mas de ello hoy nada se sabe.
Sólo un temblor de luces levemente,
Un color de miradas en las olas o en la brisa;
También, acaso, un miedo.
Todo, es verdad, inseguro.'[164]

The world is here seen as chaotic because of failed romantic involvement[165] rather than specifically because the persona has lost faith in the Absolute. (Presumably the 'pájaro asesinado' is Cernuda himself.) This is *not* explained in the poem, however, not even implicitly. The poem depicts an event which is an absurd part of an absurd world[166]. The

---

[164]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 153.

[165]See for example José María Capote Benot, *El surrealismo en la poesía de Luis Cernuda* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1976), p. 108.

[166]Brian Whittaker Nield argues that the poem can be considered 'as a parable on the human condition' ('Surrealism in Spain, with Special Reference to the Poetry of Alberti, Aleixandre, Cernuda and Lorca, 1928-

last line is particularly revealing: 'Todo, es verdad, *inseguro*'. The juxtaposition of 'verdad' and 'inseguro' suggests that the *only* truth of this world is insecurity. Furthermore, the comma between 'Todo' and 'es' underlines the severance of everything in the world and the persona's life from 'verdad'. This insecurity is reminiscent of *Blumfeld, ein älterer Junggeselle*, which also does not explain the world-view which lies behind the absurd events: it is only the absurdity itself which matters.

Let us turn to those poems which deal, explicitly, with the consequences of metaphysical chaos. 'Lázaro', from *Las Nubes*, is an exploration of acute existential alienation. It is a meditation on the Biblical story of Lazarus' resurrection, but rather than joy, the poem expresses the acute despair of a man returned to a meaningless world. The opening stanzas of the poem set the scene and describe, from Lázaro's point of view, his raising to life. The fourth stanza is then as follows:

'Alguien dijo palabras
De nuevo nacimiento.
Mas no hubo allí sangre materna
Ni vientre fecundado
Que crea con dolor nueva vida doliente.
Sólo anchas vendas, lienzos amarillos
Con olor denso, desnudaban
La carne gris y fláccida como fruto pasado;
No el terso cuerpo oscuro, rosa de los deseos,
Sino el cuerpo de un hijo de la muerte.'[167]

This stanza is imbued with a bitter cynicism which does not welcome returning to life. The first two lines have an air of indifference about the resurrection which deflates the miracle. Furthermore, rather than the vitality of the womb (which ironically can only give birth to 'vida doliente'), all around Lázaro are the signs of death and decay: the shroud, the smell, 'carne gris y fláccida', and 'el cuerpo de un hijo de la muerte', contrasting with the fact that he has been raised by Christ, who came specifically to *conquer* death[168]. This

---

1931', Thesis Cambridge 1971, p. 178).

[167]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 290.

[168]See I Corinthians 15:22, *The Holy Bible*, p. 1156.

is the resuscitation of a body which has no reason to be alive.

The later stanzas of 'Lázaro' are bleak, speaking of 'el error de estar vivo'[169]. Time after time the futility of human life is reiterated. Eventually Lázaro and the others reach a house and they go in to eat, with Christ, unnamed, as the focal point:

'Encontré el pan amargo, sin sabor las frutas,
El agua sin frescor, los cuerpos sin deseo;
La palabra hermandad sonaba falsa,
Y de la imagen del amor quedaban
Sólo recuerdos vagos bajo el viento.
Él conocía que todo estaba muerto
En mí, que yo era un muerto
Andando entre los muertos.'[170]

This world has nothing positive to offer. Bread, fruit, water and human bodies are all devoid of the qualities which make their existence worthwhile. 'Amor' is no more than a distant memory. Perhaps the ideological crux of the poem comes in the last three lines of this stanza: he is dead and amongst dead people. This phrase is in fact an almost exact quotation of the closing phrase of 'En medio de la multitud' from *Los placeres prohibidos*[171]. While the earlier poem is inspired by a disastrous amatory experience and couched in existential terms, this poem is *fundamentally* existential[172]. This is not the cry of failed love, it is despair in the face of failed life itself. It is not just that the persona is alienated and the world chaotic; what this poem proposes is that existence itself is chaotic. If we recall *Buddenbrooks*, then this is the conclusion which was reached in respect of Hanno Buddenbrook[173]. Furthermore, it was commented then that the depiction of Hanno's death pointed towards the notion that life and death are exclusively biological processes. In the same way, in this poem, Lázaro is, after resurrection, *still* 'un muerto',

---

[169]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 292.

[170]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 292-3.

[171]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 177.

[172]David Martínez's comment that Cernuda's scepticism is his 'inadaptación a lo que le rodea' is therefore a considerable over-simplification ('Luis Cernuda, poeta existencial', *Revista de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba*, 5 (1964), 162).

[173]See above, p. 33.

i.e., Christ is depicted as having *failed* to turn round the biological cycle of life and death.

There is another idea which requires to be mentioned at this stage, and that is the idea of *Angst* or 'anxiety'. While there are references to this idea in *Un río, un amor* and *Los placeres prohibidos*[174], it is worthwhile to introduce into the discussion one of Cernuda's two collections of lesser-known prose poetry, namely *Ocnos*, published originally in 1942, although undergoing two revisions and amplifications and subsequently republished in 1949 and 1963. While this collection concentrates on very personalised evocations of Cernuda's childhood (the first person singular 'yo' is much more in evidence in *Ocnos* than in *La realidad y el deseo*) and therefore is not of primary focus for this study, nevertheless the poem 'La eternidad', which dates from the first edition of *Ocnos*, has clear existential import:

> 'Poseía cuando niño una ciega fe religiosa. Quería obrar bien ... por instinto de seguir un orden bello establecido por Dios ... Mas a su idea infantil de Dios se mezclaba insidiosa la de la eternidad. Y algunas veces en la cama, ... en el silencio matinal de la casa, le asaltaba el miedo de la eternidad, del tiempo ilimitado.
>
> La palabra siempre, aplicada a la conciencia del ser espiritual que en él había, le llenaba de terror, ... Sentía su vida atacada por dos enemigos, uno frente a él y otro a sus espaldas, sin querer seguir adelante y sin poder volver atrás. Esto, de haber sido posible, es lo que hubiera preferido: volver atrás, regresar a aquella región vaga y sin memoria de donde había venido al mundo.'[175]

The first paragraph contrasts the concept of God and order ('un orden establecido por Dios') with doubt. Doubt arises because of the attendant concept of eternity, with which the child persona is unable to come to terms. The stress on religious faith could lead us to raise the objection that the loss of order is not broached here, but the doubt arises so quickly and so powerfully that the persona is almost immediately plunged into chaos. The second paragraph, which explores the nature of this chaos, concentrates specifically on

---

[174]See Elisabeth Müller, *Die Dichtung Luis Cernudas* (Genève: Romanisches Seminar der Universität Köln, 1962), p. 56.

[175]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 556.

fear[176]. This fear has something in common with Kierkegaardian anxiety, when 'freedom ... looks down into its own possibility, laying hold of finiteness to support itself'[177]. While the child does not have the understanding to appreciate that this vision of eternity is raising the question of existential choice, the effect is strikingly similar: the persona desperately looks for a means of retreat and refuge. The inclination is to retreat as far as possible, to the security of the maternal womb. While it could be argued that there is a type of 'eternity' in Cernuda's choice of refuge, it is only inasmuch as the unborn child is unaware of time and therefore not threatened by it. The most important thing is the desire for refuge and retreat, even although it is not specifically 'finiteness'[178]. This may be compared with Kafka and his expressed desire to 'ersticken' 'hinter den selbst zusammengebastelten Gittern'[179] as a direct result of *Angst*. It is ironic that, while Kierkegaard advocated a challenging response to 'anxiety', both Kafka and Cernuda register a desire to flee from it altogether.

The nature of individual identity also demands attention. For a brief analysis of this theme it is necessary to turn to a poem from a later collection, namely *Vivir sin estar viviendo*. The sense of ontological solitude is, by the time of this collection, rather more irrevocable, for the search for absolute order (discussed in the following chapter) has already taken place and failed. 'El intruso' is a particularly good example of Cernuda's growing tendency to create other personae whom he addresses as 'tú' in order to illustrate powerfully his feeling of a divided identity[180]:

'Como si equivocara el tiempo
Su trama de los días,
¿Vives acaso los de otro?,

---

[176]See also James Valender, *Cernuda y el poema en prosa* (London: Tamesis, 1984), p. 32.

[177]Kierkegaard, *Writings*, vol. VIII, p. 61. (See also above, p. 8.) While Cernuda had not actually read Kierkegaard by the time of writing this poem, nevertheless the similarity explains at least in part the fascination which the philosopher was to impart to him a few years after this. (See 'Historial de un libro', in Cernuda, *Prosa completa I*, p. 649.)

[178]I do not think it sufficient to state, 'Manchmal dehnt sich die Kindheit in einem geheimnisvollen vorgeburtlichen Zustand aus' (Müller, p. 41).

[179]See above, p. 54.

[180]I think Adrian G. Montoro's argument that Cernuda's use of 'tú' is to construct 'una imagen coherente de sí mismo' is something of an oversimplification ('Rebeldía de Cernuda', *Sin Nombre*, 6, No. 4 (1976), 29).

Extrañas ya la vida.

Lejos de ti, de la conciencia
Desacordada, el centro
Buscas afuera, entre las cosas
Presentes un momento.'[181]

Coleman comments that 'an extraneous and irrelevant being occupies his body, using it, sapping it of energies'[182]. This is a particularly vivid portrayal of someone who is unable to come to terms with himself: '¿Vives acaso los de otro?' suggests a degree of confusion as to whether his own life really *belongs* to him, reinforced by the device of addressing himself as 'tú'[183]. The following stanza reiterates this sense of dislocation, especially with the adjective 'desacordada'. The 'centro' which he now seeks is however no longer metaphysical, but his own identity[184]. As the poem progresses, the persona attempts to construct a dream about his lost youth. The closing two stanzas are then the realisation of the falseness of this endeavour:

'Hoy este intruso eres tú mismo,
Tú, como el otro antes,
Y con el cual sin gusto inicias
Costumbre a que se allane.

Para llegar al que no eres,

---

[181]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 391.

[182]J. Alexander Coleman, *Other Voices: A Study of the Late Poetry of Luis Cernuda* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969), p. 177.

[183]See also Jiménez-Fajardo, *Luis Cernuda*, p. 102. José Olivio Jiménez also speaks in general terms of '[el] uso de una segunda persona ... que apuntaría a la única alteridad posible ... de un poeta que canta desde los posos más hondos de su soledad' ('Emoción y trascendencia del tiempo en la poesía de Luis Cernuda', *La Caña Gris*, Nos. 6-8 (Otoño de 1962), p. 58).

[184]James Mandrell similarly argues, in the context of 'El indolente' from *Como quien espera el alba*, that Cernuda's use of 'tú', in Freudian terms, 'betrays "a rift in the ego which never heals but which increases as time goes on"', but also contends that this other persona can be 'a means of avoiding or denying death' ('Cernuda's "El indolente": Repetition, Doubling, and the Construction of Poetic Voice', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 65 (1988), 388). Hilda Pato meanwhile makes the very interesting point in general terms that the use of 'tú' 'no aleja al lector tampoco, sino que invoca su presta presencia en el *acto del poema*, invita su actuación y su juicio' ('El «tú» (y el «otro») en la poesía de Luis Cernuda', *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 11 (1986), 231). In 'El intruso', however, there can be no question that it is dislocation and alienation from *self* that predominates.

Quien no eres te guía,
Cuando el amigo es el extraño
Y la rosa es la espina.'[185]

The persona is totally isolated, emphasised by the way in which he has only himself with whom to converse. Furthermore, this interlocutor is an 'intruso', someone hostile. The persona's identity is not only split, but his *alter ego* accuses him and makes him aware of the failure of his life[186]. This is a more extreme example of what has been observed in Kafka's diary entry[187], and a very profound expression of ontological insecurity.

There is one final consequence of the loss of order, relating to interpersonal human relationships. This theme is contained in 'Lázaro' from *Las Nubes*, where the fifth stanza describes the resuscitated corpse's departure from the tomb to rejoin his friends and family. Although the stanza opens with a depiction of a scene of apparent serenity, it is overshadowed by negative imagery:

'El cielo rojo abría hacia lo lejos
Tras de olivos y alcores;
El aire estaba en calma.
Mas temblaban los cuerpos,
Como las ramas cuando el viento sopla,
Brotando de la noche con los brazos tendidos
Para ofrecerme su propio afán estéril.'[188]

The first three lines describe the landscape without comment, but the actions of the people greeting Lázaro are compared with branches blowing in the wind. The very last

---

[185]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 392. There are echoes here of San Juan de la Cruz's 'Modo para venir al todo', although it is doubtful if Cernuda would be successful:

'Para venir a lo que no eres,
has de ir por donde no eres.'

(*Poesías completas y otras páginas* (Zaragoza: Ebro, 1961), p. 39.) Brian Hughes also sees echoes of T. S. Eliot's 'The Dry Salvages' in 'El intruso' (*Luis Cernuda and the Modern English Poets: A Study of the Influence of Browning, Yeats and Eliot on his Poetry* (Alicante: Uhiversidad de Alicante, 1987), pp. 195-6.

[186]See also Jiménez-Fajardo, *Luis Cernuda*, pp. 102-3.

[187]See above, p. 56.

[188]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 290-1.

phrase in this stanza is of crucial importance, referring to these people's 'propio afán estéril'. The lack of vitality is not limited to the effectively still dead Lázaro, but includes those supposedly still alive. (By extension, this comparison with nature effectively makes *it* appear 'estéril' as well.) Their reaching out is fruitless: it represents, not communication, but the gulf between them. There can be no contact, not just because Lázaro is a corpse, but because their own existence is marred by the emptiness of this chaotic world. The sterility of interpersonal relationships is then underlined five stanzas later, with the line 'La palabra hermandad sonaba falsa'[189]: even the concept is meaningless. If we compare this with Mann and Kafka, while in Cernuda's poetry there is not the same level of brutality, the similar collection of isolated individuals is obvious enough[190].

The end of 'Lázaro' seems rather surprising compared with the rest of the poem, because it is apparently much more optimistic:

'Así rogué, con lágrimas,
Fuerza de soportar mi ignorancia resignado,
Trabajando, no por mi vida ni mi espíritu,
Mas por una verdad en aquellos ojos entrevista
Ahora. La hermosura es paciencia.
Sé que el lirio del campo,
...
Irrumpe un día en gloria triunfante.'[191]

This stanza is one of the rare glimpses of hope in *Las nubes*, although, given the bleak outlook of the rest of the poem, it is surely not unequivocally hopeful[192]. The first line of

---

[189]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 292.

[190]The caustic comments Cernuda makes about his own family in 'La familia' (*Poesía completa*, pp. 334-7) also illustrate the problem of interpersonal relationships and recall both Mann and Kafka.

[191]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 293.

[192]I am more in agreement with Harris (*Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 77) when he says that 'the poem as a whole is overshadowed by the sense of life's futility' than with Jiménez-Fajardo's greater stress on the hope (*Luis Cernuda*, pp. 65-7). Armando López Castro seems to ignore the majority of the poem altogether, seeing only the hopeful message, arguing that Lázaro 'de la muerte se vuelve para tener una mirada simple sobre la vida, pura e inocente como los lirios' ('Ética y poesía en Cernuda', *Cuadernos para investigación de la literatura hispánica*, 8 (1987), 83). Luis Maristany on the other hand (p. 77) is perhaps a little

this final stanza forms an admission of defeat as far as life on earth is concerned: the desire is to work, not 'por [su] vida ni [su] espíritu', but 'por una verdad'. This would appear demonstrative of a desire to seek a religious or metaphysical answer to the problems of existence, with a direct request to Christ Himself, and the closing lines of the poem seem particularly optimistic, reminiscent of the Christian concept of the Resurrection[193]. This seems curious, for what we have been discovering is Cernuda's *lack* of belief in a transcendent order, and all the consequences of that loss of order: a world which makes no sense, alienation and the chaos of existence, *Angst*, the problem of identity, the problems of interpersonal relationships. It is precisely at this point however that the search for God and absolute order begins.

---

pejorative when he says that the ending 'se trata de un caso ... de *wishful thinking*'.

[193]See for example I Corinthians 15:52: 'The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible' (*The Holy Bible*, p. 1157). Incidentally, Vicente Quirarte's comment that 'La anécdota de "Lázaro" ... es también la alegoría del hombre "que espera el alba" al término de la segunda Guerra Mundial' (*La poética del hombre dividido en la obra de Luis Cernuda* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1985), p. 65) is, while interesting, wrong: 'Lázaro' was completed in December, 1938! (See Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 797.) Cernuda himself does however state that this is the intended meaning of the title of the collection following *Las Nubes*, *Como quien espera el alba* (Cernuda, *Prosa completa I*, p. 649).

Synthesis

From the Romantic era onwards there has been steadily increasing scepticism as to the certainty of the world-order. Mann, Kafka and Cernuda all confront this and explore the loss of the Absolute and the resulting sense of a world of chaos. Mann, looking more towards the past, presents an age of security and faith, while Kafka and Cernuda can only look back with nostalgia to an era already gone, even towards a mythical 'Golden Age'. Order however has steadily disintegrated: by a changing perception of man's place in the natural world, by doubt replacing faith, by a sense of the pointlessness of all earthly striving, by a feeling that Christ's death and resurrection were not definitive and that the gulf between God and man is once more there. This can only result in despair, *Angst*, a world which makes no sense, disintegrating personal relationships, disintegrating personal identity. The complexity of *La realidad y el deseo* is demonstrated by the way in which it incorporates ideas broached by both Mann and Kafka. By the same token, comparison with Cernuda illustrates the way in which Mann's and Kafka's writing transcends its cultural boundaries.

The loss of absolute order has resulted in despair and chaos. Once Mann's and Kafka's protagonists and Cernuda's personae find themselves in the midst of this despair, they do not simply give up or passively resign themselves to this new perception of the universe. Life under these circumstances is well nigh unliveable. Rather than submitting entirely to despair, however, hope comes to the fore and there is an undertaking to find once more the order which they have lost. It is this quest which will form the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Search for Absolute Order

The Reasons for Searching and the Goal of the Search

The principal difference observed between Mann on the one hand and Kafka and Cernuda on the other in the first chapter of this study was largely one of perspective: *Buddenbrooks* traces the decline from order into chaos, while in Kafka's and Cernuda's writing, that decline has already taken place. It is the way that the desire for order manifests itself which will form the focus of the rest of this study. However illogical it might seem, given the loss of faith in transcendent order, a search for some kind of Absolute is apparent in all three authors, and it is appropriate to place this theme first in our consideration, before turning later to discuss the search for order in the material world[1]. If there are differences between Mann's writing and Kafka's and Cernuda's as far as this topic is concerned, it is more one of relative importance: it is explored by Mann as one theme among many within *Buddenbrooks*, while Kafka and Cernuda devote rather more space to it.

The theme of a search for absolute order in *Buddenbrooks* is concentrated in the character of Thomas. What is paramount is the 'mid-life crisis', as it were, which Thomas experiences, documented largely in part X of the novel, although it begins at least as early as part VIII. We saw already that, by the time of the celebrations for the family firm's 100th anniversary (in part VIII), 'he finds the world around him pointless'[2]. This steadily intensifies until it climaxes in a sense of utter desperation. While Thomas once felt fulfilled and satisfied with his flourishing business, advantageous marriage and respected position as Senator of the city-state of Lübeck, he now feels 'unaussprechlich müde und verdrossen'[3], for simple materialist 'Bürgertum' is not enough. Thomas' sense of despair and alienation cannot be underestimated:

---

[1]There is always a degree of intermingling of themes, which makes such a distinction a little arbitrary, but for clarity of analysis it is well nigh unavoidable.

[2]See above, p. 27.

[3]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 622.

> ' ... was sich in ihm verstärkte, war allein die Überzeugung, ... daß sein Hintritt nahe bevorstehe. ... Einige Male befiel ihn bei Tische die Empfindung, daß er schon nicht mehr eigentlich mit den Seinen zusammensitze,'[4]

The sense of severe alienation from those around him is obvious. The seriousness of this is underlined by the fact that this is happening within his closest family circle. It is also significant that he has become convinced of the nearness of his own demise, for it is that, more than anything else within him, which begins to turn his attention towards matters eternal.

Thomas' life hitherto has concentrated predominantly on the material side of existence. What happens now is that his realisation that he will die causes him to fight against that biological necessity. His commitment to materialism is not strong enough that he can accept the idea of a God-less universe and thus focus his life exclusively on the tangible world. As we know, he is 'metaphysisch bedürftig'[5]: this must surely be the principal motivating factor in an active search for the Absolute, i.e., the *need* for a metaphysical answer to the problems of existence. This 'metaphysische Bedürftigkeit' is explored further in the novel: Thomas' 'fighting against' death is another way of expressing a desire for immortality:

> '[Thomas hatte] sich die Fragen der Ewigkeit und Unsterblichkeit historisch beantwortet und sich gesagt, daß er in seinen Vorfahren gelebt habe und in seinen Nachfahren leben werde. ... Nun aber zeigte sich, daß es vor dem nahen und durchdringenden Auge des Todes dahinsank und zunichte ward,'[6]

Thomas, as a product of his 'Bürger' background, was comforted by the sense of an ongoing cycle of tradition. He is heir to a patrician family, to a line of businessmen, and has seen himself as a 'link' in a long 'chain' running through the generations. He should therefore continue to live in his son, who should be the next link in that chain. This sense

---

[4]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 664.

[5]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 665. See also above, p. 25.

[6]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 665.

of tradition is however inadequate. Furthermore, Hanno, physically and emotionally weak as he is, cannot continue the Buddenbrook family tradition. Thomas therefore desperately needs to find *genuine* immortality, the immortality of his own soul.

It is reasonable to expect a man with a strong Christian upbringing, against which he has never actively rebelled, to look to that religion when he longs for immortality. We know however that his religious observance has always been little more than a charade and that he is far more dubious and sceptical than was his complacent grandfather[7]. His search for absolute order is thus less specifically Christian than we might initially expect. Indeed, throughout Thomas' search there are many things which are unclear, and one such element lies in precisely what his goal is. He certainly has a deep longing within himself to be assured of a metaphysical or transcendental reality, but the equally strong 'bourgeois' instinct to keep up appearances ('die »Dehors« wahren'[8]) is also stressed. Thomas really does not know himself what his goal is, or what benefit he expects:

> 'Sobald er nämlich sein zeitliches Ende ... als etwas ganz Nahes und Greifbares betrachtete, ... begann er ..., sein Verhältnis zum Tode und den unirdischen Fragen zu prüfen...'[9]

It is interesting that, for all Thomas' doubt and materialism, there does not appear to be any doubt that there are at least 'unirdische Fragen'. (A genuinely atheist standpoint rejects such questions as absurd.) This not only illustrates Thomas' 'metaphysische Bedürftigkeit', it also demonstrates a vague belief that there is some kind of Absolute, but it is distant. Again, there is a perceived gap between God and man[10], but now the matter needs to be analysed, and the gulf needs to be bridged. His whole quest is however very imprecise and ill-defined. There is no *specific* goal, no overpowering commitment to find that for which he is looking: he simply knows he hungers for a sense of security, he longs

---

[7]See above, p. 26.

[8]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 627.

[9]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 665.

[10]See above, p. 27.

to know what lies in store for him beyond the grave and hopes feverishly that it may be 'Unsterblichkeit'[11]. There are references to 'das Rätsel entwirren'[12], and 'alles ordnen müssen'[13], and the episode in which he encounters Schopenhauer's philosophy in particular reveals his uncertainty:

> 'Aber gerade der Wechsel von Licht und Finsternis, von dumpfer Verständnislosigkeit, vagem Ahnen und plötzlicher Hellsicht hielt ihn in Atem,'[14]

His goal is, ultimately, indefinable. It is an experience or philosophy that will somehow give 'order' in its widest sense to the feeling of 'chaos' which he is experiencing, a sense that his life will not be entirely in vain and that he can die in peace. There is however a strong feeling from the outset that such an ill-defined longing will be doomed to find nothing.

---

[11]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 665.

[12]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 666.

[13]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 667.

[14]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, pp. 667-8.

The Process of Searching and the Result of the Search

How does Thomas set about his quest? There is little indication of the process of his searching, although there is one element which is of particular importance. This relates to bridging the gap, to mediating between God and humanity. Something of this is seen in part X, chapter five:

> 'Obgleich Thomas Buddenbrook ... mit einer kleinen Neigung zum Katholizismus gespielt hatte, war er doch ganz erfüllt von dem ... Verantwortlichkeitsgefühl des echten und leidenschaftlichen Protestanten. Nein, dem Höchsten und Letzten gegenüber gab es keinen Beistand von außen, keine Vermittlung, Absolution, Betäubung und Tröstung!'[15]

Thomas' understanding of the idea of a mediator between mankind and the realm of the eternal clearly derives from his Protestant 'bourgeois' background. He perceives his situation as one where the onus is on him, where he must take his destiny upon his own shoulders. There is a total rejection of human intermediaries, represented by his turning away from Roman Catholicism, where the priest fulfils the mediating rôle of Jewish priests in the Old Testament. It is however somewhat ironic that this sentiment is expressed in terms of the Protestant ethic of strictness and personal responsibility, because Protestantism stresses above all faith in Christ, the one true 'mediator'[16]. This does, of course, lift Thomas' struggle above the purely earthly sphere: he must find his own way to 'true' faith in Christ. This, therefore, could be an affirmation of Christ's divinity, an acknowledgement that mere human beings are inadequate. But Thomas is *not* returning to the faith of his parents. His rejection of human mediation seems to be more a conscious assertion of the attitudes of strict personal discipline and responsibility which have been instilled in him; he also rejects Christ's mediation. The root of his tragedy lies in his continuing adherence to 'bourgeois' principles.

The central part of the process of Thomas' search is the episode in which he

---

[15]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 666.

[16]'For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus', I Timothy 2:5, *The Holy Bible*, p. 1192.

finds by accident the second volume of Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, a little later in this same fifth chapter of part X[17]. The inclusion of Schopenhauer is profoundly ironic. Schopenhauer's philosophy is pessimistic, based on an atheistic view of the universe, so it is ludicrous that Thomas' search for order should find its climax in this episode. Having acknowledged that he wishes to analyse 'die *un*irdischen Fragen'[18], by reading Schopenhauer he is ironically actually returning himself to the earthly sphere. Thomas nevertheless has a profound spiritual experience in which he is gripped by a philosophy which seems to understand his suffering:

> 'Er empfand ... die Genugtuung des Leidenden, der vor der Kälte und Härte des Lebens sein Leiden beständig schamvoll und bösen Gewissens versteckt hielt und plötzlich aus der Hand eines Großen und Weisen die grundsätzliche und feierliche Berechtigung erhält, an der Welt zu leiden — '[19]

It is made quite explicit that he does not fully comprehend the concepts which Schopenhauer is exploring (it is, for example, too much for his 'Bürgerhirn'[20]). What is important is his emotional response; he finds in Schopenhauer something which speaks of the ability of the sufferer to rise above the tyranny of the 'Wille', although he cannot make sense of how this is to be achieved. In the paragraphs immediately following the last quotation he reads, in its entirety, the chapter from Book II of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* entitled 'Über den Tod und sein Verhältnis zur Unzerstörbarkeit unseres Wesens an sich'. The irony of his search reaches a climax here, because Schopenhauer is discussing immortality in this chapter, but not in supra-natural terms: it is posited rather that the individual becomes part of the eternal flux of the cosmos[21]. Thomas goes over

---

[17]For the autobiographical background to this episode, see Mann's essay 'Lebensabriß', in *Über mich selbst*, p. 113.

[18]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 665. See also above, p. 87.

[19]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 667.

[20]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 668.

[21]Janaway, discussing this chapter, says:

> 'The world manifests itself as me here and now, but after I cease to exist, the same world will manifest itself in the same way as other individuals of the same species, each of which will find itself as the subject of consciousness, refer to itself as "I", pursue its ends, experience suffering and satisfaction, and cease to exist in turn.'

(Janaway, pp. 88-9.) See further Joseph Gerard Brennan, '*Buddenbrooks* and After', *American Scholar*, 62 (1993), 127.

these Schopenhauerian ideas of immortality in his mind until, in the middle of the night, he comes to the following conclusion:

> 'In allen denen werde ich sein, die je und je Ich gesagt haben, sagen und sagen werden: *besonders aber in denen, die es voller, kräftiger, fröhlicher sagen...*'[22]

This is the summit of his spiritual experience. He believes himself to have found whatever it was he was seeking, the concept of eternity and order is opening itself up to him, the 'miracle' is happening[23]. But this is no Absolute, and hardly genuine immortality. To be part of the eternal cycle of life and death is actually not altogether dissimilar from Thomas' somewhat banal belief in 'tradition' when he was younger, which he has already realised is unsatisfactory[24]. More important however is the fact that Schopenhauer posits that human beings are confined *exclusively* to the terrestrial, material sphere, with no hope whatsoever of bridging that gulf between humanity and any kind of supra-natural force. In any case, Thomas fails to understand fully what he is reading, underscored by the way in which he so deftly shifts from being a Schopenhauerian 'sufferer' to a Nietzschean 'Jasager'[25]. The allusion to Nietzsche's philosophy is even more ironic, for Nietzsche's 'Jasager' are those who affirm vibrant life, and whose horizons are exclusively within the earthly human sphere. (One of Nietzsche's aversions to Christianity is that it is in his opinion concerned with 'self-hatred'[26].) With such a shift in emphasis, Thomas is unconsciously locking himself ever more fully into the terrestrial sphere and moving further and further away from genuine

---

[22]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 671.

[23]George Byron Bridges points outs that the passage quoted immediately follows Thomas' rejection of the need to continue living in his son, and argues psychoanalytically that Thomas is 'symbolically kill[ing] his son' ('Homoeroticism and the Father-Son Relation in the Principal Works of Herman Melville and Thomas Mann', Diss. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 1983, pp. 172-3). This ignores the fact that his vision of Schopenhauerian immortality means that he should have no more need for his son to carry on the family tradition.

[24]See above, p. 87.

[25]See Fred Müller, *Thomas Mann: »Buddenbrooks«* (München: Oldenbourg, 1979), p. 56, and Werner Frizen, *Zaubertrank der Metaphysik: Quellenkritische Überlegungen im Umkreis der Schopenhauer-Rezeption Thomas Manns* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1980), pp. 93-4.

[26]See Jon Tuska, 'Thomas Mann and Nietzsche: A Study in his Ideas', *Germanic Review*, 39 (1964), 288.

immortality and, indeed, from absolute order.

Failure is now inevitable. This is confirmed when Thomas becomes aware of the transient, illusory nature of even this spiritual experience. He experiences a sense of freedom and joy, but it is effectively far closer to freedom from nightmarish terror than any kind of 'ontological' freedom. The experience is over even before he goes back to sleep:

> 'Sein Gehirn stand still, sein Wissen erlosch, und in ihm gab es plötzlich wieder nichts mehr als verstummende Finsternis.'[27]

The quest is a failure, any order that might be found is for Thomas merely illusion which does not and cannot last. Thomas' life after this night ordeal is characterised by a feeble return to a Christianity which inspires in him little conviction[28] and by the desire once again 'die »Dehors« zu wahren'. His death not long after comes as no real surprise, and the lack of meaning, the failure to find any lasting understanding of eternity is underscored by the humiliating way in which he dies, collapsing in the street, his clothes soiled, and lying helpless until he is taken home.

---

[27]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 672.

[28]'So aber geschah es, daß Thomas Buddenbrook, ... matt zurücksank zu den Begriffen und Bildern, in deren gläubigem Gebrauch man seine Kindheit geübt hatte. Er ging umher und erinnerte sich des einigen und persönlichen Gottes, ... dieser ganzen, ein wenig unklaren und ein wenig absurden Geschichte, die ... nur gehorsamen Glauben beanspruchte und die ... zur Hand sein würde, wenn die letzten Ängste kamen... Wirklich?' (Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 673.) The final questioning 'Wirklich?' is in itself proof that this is not a new search for the Absolute but merely a numb scepticism.

Franz Kafka

The Reasons for Searching

In chapter I, some reasons for attributing an existential significance to Kafka's writing were discussed. Attention will be focussed in this chapter on *Das Schloß*, and, while the ambiguous nature of the novel is by no means underestimated, the concentration will be on the extent to which the novel can be interpreted in terms of a search for absolute order. This is an issue which has moved to the periphery of Kafka research in more recent years, with deconstructive readings especially coming to the fore, but one thing a comparative study with Cernuda's poetry will show is that it is an issue which cannot and should not be ignored.

Perhaps the most curious aspect of the opening chapters of *Das Schloß* is the fact that the novel simply presents K., an effectively nameless character, who is seeking the castle: no explanation of his action is given. Neither K. nor the narrator nor any other character asks why he has come; his arrival is a simple fact. While the castle itself is always enigmatic, the fact of K.'s quest (his desire to enter it) is irrefutable and assumed tacitly to have validity in its own right. When the novel opens, any attempt to clarify K.'s presence in the village is completely ignored; after a description of the 'Schloßberg', the novel launches immediately into the narrative of the events of the evening as K. looks for accommodation for the night. As readers we are left to examine for ourselves exactly why it should be that K. undertakes his search at all. An indication of the existential importance of his quest appears in chapter seven in conversation with the schoolteacher:

> '»Daß ich unhöflich gewesen wäre, weiß ich nicht«, sagte K., ... »daß ich aber an anderes zu denken hatte als an ein feines Benehmen, ist richtig, denn es handelte sich um meine Existenz, die bedroht ist durch eine schmachvolle amtliche Wirtschaft,«'[29]

K. articulates how crucial his search really is. Social norms and conventions must be

---

[29]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 88.

subordinated to it, for he is concerned with the most significant thing in his life, his very existence. The term 'bedroht' is however ominous: there appears to be something suspicious, even sinister, about the castle. There is therefore a certain degree of doubt as to the validity of such a search, and thus rather than seeking the castle, his need may equally be to avoid it and establish his own being free of the 'Absolute' of the castle. But if this is the case, why has K. voluntarily chosen to come to this village? The 'schmachvolle amtliche Wirtschaft' could equally refer to the bureaucracy which seems to surround the castle and block his entry to it, and that could be the 'threat'. In that case, the castle could indeed be something positive *beyond* the 'schmachvolle amtliche Wirtschaft'.

While K.'s predominant attitude is his desire to enter the castle, there is nevertheless an indication that freedom from the castle could be an alternative, introduced in the first chapter, just after K. has managed to establish his claim to be the castle's 'Landvermesser'. He says the following to the landlord of the inn:

> '»Auch fürchte ich, daß mir das Leben oben im Schlosse nicht zusagen würde. Ich will immer frei sein.«'[30]

We see here the dual nature of K.'s search: the desire to enter the castle, and the wish to establish his own individuality separate from it. Thus, not only may the validity of his quest for order be in doubt, it may even be suggested that there is, genuinely, an alternative route for K., another form of existence where *he* gives his life its direction, not dependent on an external force for guidance. This note of aggression in K.'s attitude almost suggests a kind of post-religious 'hero' whose life is based on Existentialist notions of 'radical choice'[31]. In that instance, the castle's authority as a transcendent power will only be acknowledged if it can prove itself to be of genuine value. If the castle fails to meet K.'s expectations, then he may be prepared to abandon it and take control of

---

[30]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 11.

[31]Jacob Golomb argues that this sort of idea dominates Kafka's writing:

> '[The] absurd waiting of Kafka and his heroes reminds one of the "courageous" Nietzschean skeptic who also does not wait passively in resignation and despair.'

('Kafka's Existential Metamorphosis: From Kierkegaard to Nietzsche and Beyond', *Clio*, 14 (1985), 280.)

his own existence, ontologically independent of any other authority or power[32].

While K.'s aggressive attitude does persist for some time, as the text progresses he questions the validity of his search less and less, and the desire to enter the castle comes to dominate his behaviour. K.'s conversation with the schoolteacher quoted above follows his consultation with the 'Gemeindevorsteher', where K. relates what makes him stay in the village:

> '»... die Opfer, die ich brachte, um von zu Hause fortzukommen, die lange, schwere Reise, die begründeten Hoffnungen, die ich mir wegen der Aufnahme hier machte, meine vollständige Vermögenslosigkeit, die Unmöglichkeit, jetzt wieder eine andere entsprechende Arbeit zu Hause zu finden, und endlich ... meine Braut,«'[33]

K. would therefore *not* be happy to abandon his search in favour of 'taking control of his own existence'. He is very much committed to it, having given up everything that he knows for it. Thus his desire 'immer frei zu sein' is presumably more an indication of his initial arrogance and aggression which steadily diminishes. While K. entertains doubts about the validity of the castle, nevertheless its significance for him cannot be underestimated.

If anything is apparent from this analysis so far, it is that K. seems to have few identifiable reasons for wishing to enter the castle. His reasons always remain somewhat vague and enigmatic. We may however gain a clearer picture if we consider one character who is at a different stage of a similar search, namely the chamber-maid Pepi[34]. Pepi

---

[32]It is worth mentioning that it has been argued that another type of 'alternative existence', i.e., one where K. becomes a part of the community which is the village, is the 'true' goal which K. 'ought' to seek, rather than trying to force his way into the castle, although this is a goal which K. never countenances himself. In particular it has been argued that the clownish behaviour of K.'s assistants 'erode[s] K.'s illusions', thus showing him 'both what he ought not to be and what he might become' (Richard Sheppard, *On Kafka's Castle: A Study* (London: Croom Helm, 1973), p. 50). The problems with this sort of argument are, first, that it is irrelevant, since K. is *purely* interested in the castle, and second, that there is no evidence whatsoever that paying attention to the assistants would be of any benefit whatsoever.

[33]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 74.

[34]A parallel noted by Sokel, p. 504.

longs to improve her wretched situation; when Frieda left the 'Herrenhof' to be with K., she was promoted to barmaid, but on Frieda's return she returns to her former position. In the final chapter K. then makes the following interesting comment about Pepi's understanding of her promotion:

'»Es ist eine Stelle wie eine andere, für dich aber ist sie das Himmelreich,«'[35]

This is one of the expressions in the novel which is most suggestive of a theological interpretation. While this may be merely ironic exaggeration of the post of barmaid, nevertheless there is a sense in which, for Pepi, elevation to a prominent post in the village's 'subsidiary' of the castle which is the 'Herrenhof' represents for her a new kind of more meaningful life[36]. To be affiliated with the castle, in however small a way, would appear to enrich and enhance life in a way that nothing else can. Such an image is therefore the driving force behind her yearning. We should not however be blind to the rest of K.'s comment, namely that '*Es ist eine Stelle wie eine andere*'. In other words, it has no genuine transcendental significance. This nevertheless does not alter Pepi's perception of it, and, even if K. might by now be disillusioned, it is not unreasonable to suggest that it was a similar spark of faith that affiliation with the castle could in some way represent the 'Himmelreich' that initiated K.'s own quest.

---

[35]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 290.

[36]I find Mark E. Blum's argument that 'Pepi appears ... as the focus of an empathic encounter modelling the kind of conversation that reflects the critical empathy necessary to sustain a community' ('Will Tempered by Empathy Establishes Community: The Significance of Momus in Kafka's *Das Schloß*', *Colloquia Germanica*, 26 (1993), 126), extremely unconvincing: Pepi is almost as much an outsider in this village as K.

The Goal of the Search

In attempting to understand K's quest, it is appropriate to establish the salient characteristics of the castle. K. is certainly actively seeking the castle, but to what extent is it worth attaining? This sparked heated debate in the critical literature, ever since Max Brod's interpretation of the castle as a symbol of divine grace[37]. There is evidence in *Das Schloß* which could point towards the castle as in some way embodying divine order. Perhaps the most prominent feature is certain phraseology employed in connection with it. An example is to be found in chapter three, when Frieda says the following to the peasants in the inn:

> '»Im Namen Klamms«, rief sie, »in den Stall!«'[38]

The parallel between this statement and religious terminology is obvious: Frieda uses the name of the important official Klamm as if she were invoking the name of the Almighty. This is reinforced later by the landlady's referring to 'der Wille Klamms'[39]. In addition, in chapter one it is stated that 'oben auf dem Berg ragte alles frei und leicht empor'[40], which suggests a purer, almost heavenly realm which the castle occupies. This could be an example of Kafka deliberately teasing the reader. On the other hand, we should not forget that Klamm, who is no more than a representative of the castle, has considerable authority and is greatly respected in the village: the argument that such an allusion could be teasing is countered by the fact that Frieda's command *does* have the desired effect. As soon as Klamm's name is used, the men do as they are told. If therefore we have been deluded, we are no more deluded than the villagers. The castle has considerable authority over the village, and an aura of a transcendent, supra-natural power[41].

---

[37]See Max Brod, 'Nachwort zur ersten Ausgabe', in Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 349. This has been countered most famously by Erich Heller (*Kafka*, p.131). For an overview of this debate, see Sheppard, especially p. 189ff.

[38]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 42.

[39]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 53. Barbara Beutner discusses further instances of this (*Die Bildsprache Franz Kafkas* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1973), pp. 244-5).

[40]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, pp. 12-13.

[41]As Hans Küng says, 'Das Schloß ist ... Ausdruck ... einer *chiffrierten, änigmatischen Transzendenzerfahrung*,' ('Religion im Zusammenbruch der Moderne', in *Dichtung und Religion: Pascal,*

Infallibility is apparently another attribute of the castle, or at least of its administration, which suggests divine order, as the 'Gemeindevorsteher' asserts:

> '»Freilich, [die Kontrollbehörden] sind nicht dazu bestimmt, Fehler im groben Wortsinn herauszufinden, denn Fehler kommen ja nicht vor, und selbst, wenn einmal ein Fehler vorkommt, wie in Ihrem Fall, wer darf denn endgültig sagen, daß es ein Fehler ist.«'[42]

There is something comic about this tortuous sort of logic, but one thing above all is clear, and that is that, at least as far as the 'Gemeindevorsteher' is concerned, the activities of the castle and those who are in its service are always indisputably right. The castle does not make mistakes; what to someone may seem to be a mistake is a flaw in that person's understanding. This is precisely the nature which is ascribed to the Divinity: God is *always* right, whether mere humans believe so or not. Such a perception is possibly the most definitive affirmation of the positive nature of the 'absolute order' which the castle appears to represent to the villagers[43].

The castle is, however, highly enigmatic. To claim that the castle is entirely positive or that it may be directly equated with a divinity is to distort the novel, for there is evidence to suggest evil in the nature of the castle. The schoolteacher suggests this when speaking to K. in the first chapter:

> '»Wie sollte ich [den Grafen] kennen?« sagte der Lehrer leise und fügte laut auf französisch hinzu: »Nehmen Sie Rücksicht auf die Anwesenheit unschuldiger Kinder.«'[44]

Gryphius, Lessing, Hölderlin, Novalis, Kierkegaard, Dostojewski, Kafka, ed. Walter Jens and Hans Küng (München: Kindler, 1985), p. 297).

[42]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 65.

[43]While we may be somewhat sceptical of such a belief, given the administrative chaos which seems to reign even in the 'Gemeindevorsteher's' office (see for example *Das Schloß*, p. 70, when Mizzi, the 'Gemeindevorsteher's' wife, and K.'s assistants are fighting through piles of files), there is no disputing the belief in its infallibility.

[44]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 14.

The schoolteacher's words are shocked enough to be almost comic. Far from representing a Deity, the castle here seems to be the epitome of evil: even the mention of the count's name ('Graf Westwest'[45]) is sufficient to corrupt children[46]! While we could lend this statement undue weight (it is only an isolated assertion, and one so extreme in its evaluation that it becomes less convincing), nevertheless it does provide a sinister note, which is then reinforced by the air of doom and foreboding which seems to exist in the presentation of the castle itself:

> 'Nur einen Turm sah K. ... Schwärme von Krähen umkreisten [den Turm].
>
> Die Augen auf das Schloß gerichtet, ging K. weiter, nichts sonst kümmerte ihn. Aber im Näherkommen enttäuschte ihn das Schloß, es war doch nur ein recht elendes Städtchen,'[47]

Politzer comments that, 'According to German folklore, crows, like jackdaws, are harbingers of death.'[48] The fact that crows swarm around this castle contradicts the apparently positive 'oben auf dem Berg ragte alles frei und leicht empor'[49]. Might K. be best to avoid the castle? Negative imagery and statements are more or less juxtaposed to positive imagery and language. This is not all: in addition to this atmosphere of doom we should not ignore the phrase 'ein recht elendes Städtchen'. This makes the castle appear worthless, even as something to be pitied to which K. might well be justified in feeling superior. The castle may be all too earth-bound and ordinary.

Is there any evidence that the castle is *actively* a force of evil, rather than merely 'ordinary'? Again, this is never explicit. There are certain clues: Olga's sister Amalia was summoned by Sortini, presumably for immoral purposes, but we do not see his letter to

---

[45]Politzer (p. 235) may overstate the case when he suggests that 'the negative emphasis provided by repetition [of 'West'] is counteracted by the law of logic according to which a double negation results in a reinforced affirmation. The West of the West may indicate the decline of the decline, that is, an ascent.'

[46]Werner Hoffmann argues that the teacher's shock is a result of the invocation of 'den «heiligen» Namen' (*«Ansturm gegen die letzte irdische Grenze». Aphorismen und Spätwek Kafkas* (Bern: Francke, 1984), p. 181). If that is the case, why is the teacher only outraged on the *children's* behalf?

[47]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 13.

[48]Politzer, p. 229.

[49]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, pp. 12-13. See also above, p. 97.

Amalia and she does not find out for certain what was in store, although it is easy to guess[50]. Moreover, while Olga certainly prostitutes herself for her family, there is no evidence that this is either necessary or helpful. One undeniably negative feature of the castle, however, is its indifference towards K.:

> 'Wenn K. das Schloß ansah, so war es ihm manchmal, als beobachtete er jemanden, der ruhig dasitze und vor sich hinsehe, nicht etwa in Gedanken verloren und dadurch gegen alles abgeschlossen, sondern frei und unbekümmert,'[51]

In the first place, this counters any argument that the castle is *entirely* earthly or human: no socio-political argument can adequately explain a castle appearing to have the ability to 'see'. It is the attribution of a human faculty to a presumably inanimate object. More important than this is the fact that this points towards an understanding of the castle as an indifferent Absolute. It is a more extreme form of Thomas Buddenbrook's conviction that there is a gap between God and humanity[52], and is expressed in the vague belief that there is some kind of order external to one's own being, some universal transcendent power, but, rather than the loving, self-sacrificing God of Christianity, it is one which looks on humanity unfeeling, disinterested, uncaring.

Kafka's 'Absolute' is, nevertheless, able to take an additional active rôle: there is a certain amount of evidence that the castle guides K. away from his goal, and it is in the light of this that we should consider the figure of Bürgel. Bürgel is often portrayed as the character who describes the real means of entrance to the castle[53]. Summoned to see Erlanger at the 'Herrenhof', K. enters Bürgel's room by mistake, who suggests that an applicant may be successful if he happens upon a castle employee during the night. In

---

[50]Sheppard suggests that, since 'it is perfectly normal for the girls to sleep with officials, ... in the terms of the village world, Amalia is not asked to do anything reprobate or shocking' (p. 157). I find this unconvincing.

[51]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 96.

[52]See above, p. 27.

[53]See Ronald Gray, *Kafka's Castle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 65, and Heller, *Kafka*, p. 229. Politzer (pp. 257-8), is however much more sceptical and rather more convincing in his argument.

that instance the official will apparently be less able to resist the applicant's claim. This however is not all:

> 'Bürgel aber ... lächelte, als sei es ihm eben gelungen, K. ein wenig irrezuführen.'[54]

Even taking the relativising 'als sei' into account, this sentence undermines what has gone before which seemed to indicate the 'true way' to enter the castle. Thus from being a potentially positive transcendent power, the castle has become, *equally*, the force which seems to turn away those who would come to it[55].

Why should the castle seem to represent opposites simultaneously, both the 'wahre' and the 'falsche Weg', right and wrong? One obvious reason is that Kafka did not want to write a novel which presented any conclusive answer to the problem of man's existential chaos; a very similar duality is, after all, also to be found at the heart of *Der Prozeß*. This is however only part of the reason. Politzer stresses the labyrinthine nature of K.'s search, and points out that 'one of the most perfect labyrinths is the mirror cabinet, and Kafka seems to use similar techniques to delay K.'s progress.'[56] Relevant in this regard are Olga's words in her conversation with K. in chapter fifteen, in which she tells K. of the plight of her family and gives him many insights into attitudes in the village. She is talking here of the villagers' varying perceptions of Klamm:

> '»Er soll ganz anders aussehen, wenn er ins Dorf kommt, und anders, wenn er es verläßt, anders, ehe er Bier getrunken hat, anders nachher, ... und ... fast grundverschieden oben im Schloß. ... Nun gehen natürlich alle diese

---

[54]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 248.

[55]Martin Greenberg (*The Terror of Art: Kafka and Modern Literature* (London: André Deutsch, 1971), p. 212) makes the additional point that, since the landlady is more impressed at the mention of Erlanger's name ('Die Erwähnung der beiden Verhöre — gar jenes mit Erlanger ...', Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 270), Bürgel is not actually as important as Erlanger. This further undermines the validity of what Bürgel says. See further Ulf Abraham, *Der verhörte Held: Verhöre, Urteile und die Rede von Recht und Schuld im Werk Franz Kafkas* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1985), p. 49.

[56]Politzer, p. 237. Wiebrecht Ries comments also how this is paralleled in Nietzsche's writings, which 'beschwören den mythischen Raum des Labyrinthischen' ('Kafka und Nietzsche', *Nietzsche-Studien*, 2 (1973), 264).

> Unterschiede auf keine Zauberei zurück, sondern sind sehr begreiflich, entstehen durch die augenblickliche Stimmung, den Grad der Aufregung, die unzähligen Abstufungen der Hoffnung oder Verzweiflung, in welcher sich der Zuschauer ... befindet.«'[57]

The qualities which the castle (and its representatives) appears to have are not necessarily its own inherent qualities. Rather the villagers have their own image of what it is (or should be) and they project that on to it. The castle is a kind of mirror which reflects individuals' own ideas. Thus the castle could be an externalisation of all K.'s hopes, fears, longings. This idea of a 'mirror' illustrates further that the search for the Absolute is a progression from the loss of faith already analysed: having lost his sense of existential security, man searches his *own being* for some vestige of what at *one* time, as an *external* force, was seen to give direction to life. Whatever presence the castle itself might have, all individuals can find are their own contradictory thoughts and wishes.

The castle is more than the reflection of K.'s (and others') own perceptions. The mirror imagery illustrates the way in which reality can be distorted. The villagers (and by extension also K.) project images on to the castle and its representatives, and these images only serve to confuse. This idea is demonstrated later in K.'s same conversation with Olga:

> '»Und doch kannst du im Dorf Leute finden, die beschwören würden, daß Momus Klamm ist und kein anderer. So arbeiten die Leute an ihrer eigenen Verwirrung.«'[58]

This not only reinforces the fact that the villagers project on to the castle and its representatives that for which they long within themselves, it also shows that they cannot see that it is not even a true projection; in order to sustain their own hopeless aspirations, the villagers distort reality[59]. Thus the individual's search for order can lead to his own

---

[57]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, pp. 169-70.

[58]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 174.

[59]I think this is more accurate than Arnold Heidsieck's claim that 'it must be doubted whether there exists anyone whose name is Klamm' ('Kafka's Narrative Ontology', *Philosophy and Literature*, 11 (1987), 255). The fact that both Frieda and Gardena testify to direct contact with him makes such an interpretation

despair and confusion. This in turn draws the centre of attention away from the castle. In the last analysis, it may not matter much whether the castle itself is representative of an Absolute, of good or evil, or indeed if it is nothing more than an empty façade: certainly it has a physical presence, but what we learn of the castle and its representatives often stems more from the villagers' opinions than from objective evidence of the castle itself. The castle is therefore frequently of secondary importance, for both K. and the villagers attempt to see a significance in the castle which is an expression of their needs and longings. It was argued in chapter I that there seemed to be a fear of anyone who would probe too deeply beneath the surface of their established society. Perhaps that is because they suspect themselves that little is left besides the façade of their own thoughts and ideas.

---

unlikely, although his presence in the novel is admittedly vague.

The Process of Searching

The greater part of *Das Schloß* is given over, not to a description of the castle, but to relating K.'s quest. He has a huge degree of commitment to his search for order. He has come some considerable distance to the village, and has given up everything that he once knew[60]. How does K. then go about his quest? Rather than proceed laboriously from the beginning of the novel to the end, it is actually more profitable to concentrate on certain themes which run through the novel, especially (amongst others) the themes of the labyrinth and of mediation.

Perhaps the most important image which Kafka uses to illustrate K.'s search is the first of these two, namely the labyrinth. Politzer reminds us that the labyrinth is an ancient image, and points out that the 'maze has proved attractive to the human imagination at various stages of its development, primarily the early ones and those when man was in search of a lost primitivity'[61]. The labyrinth has also traditionally been the place where 'men tried by every means known to them to overcome death and to renew life'[62]. The labyrinth is thus associated directly with the search for a lost Absolute. Furthermore, K.'s quest is labyrinthine inasmuch as he tries a range of methods to reach the castle and is continually rebuffed and defeated. We can, however, be more specific. When K. makes his very first attempt to go to the castle, we read the following:

> 'So ging er wieder vorwärts, aber es war ein langer Weg. Die Straße nämlich, die Hauptstraße des Dorfes, führte nicht zum Schloßberg, sie führte nur nahe heran, dann aber, wie absichtlich, bog sie ab, und wenn sie sich auch vom Schloß nicht entfernte, so kam sie ihm doch auch nicht näher.'[63]

It would be difficult to find a more explicitly labyrinthine picture than this. An endless

---

[60]We have previously seen how he tells the 'Gemeindevorsteher' of:

> '»...die Opfer, die ich brachte, um von zu Hause fortzukommen, die lange, schwere Reise, ...«'

(Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 74.)

[61]Politzer, p. 230.

[62]C. N. Deedes, 'The labyrinth', quoted in Politzer, p. 231.

[63]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 15.

path which seems to lead K. in one direction, then turns off in another direction, constantly teasing him to carry on a little further because it comes so close to the castle hill, and instead only turning back on itself and forcing K. into the village once more. Kafka's labyrinth has no centre: the goal is always a little further on, round another corner. More than that, it does not seem to matter how much the person is prepared to continue searching: the labyrinth is able to increase indefinitely to meet and confound his expectations. Furthermore, the fact that K. keeps turning back towards the village is in itself significant. We have already seen the importance of K.'s *ideas* about the castle in preference to the castle itself. This obviously restricts K. to the human sphere. The labyrinth image underscores the extent to which K. is *entirely* confined to the human sphere.

The labyrinth image is not limited to K.'s movements within the village. There is also a labyrinthine quality to communication with the castle. The 'Gemeindevorsteher' paints the following picture:

> '»wenn man von hier aus im Schloß anruft, ... würde [es] bei allen läuten, wenn nicht, wie ich bestimmt weiß, bei fast allen dieses Läutewerk abgestellt wäre. Hier und da aber hat ein übermüdeter Beamter das Bedürfnis, sich ein wenig zu zerstreuen, ... und schaltet das Läutewerk ein; dann bekommen wir Antwort, allerdings eine Antwort, die nichts ist als Scherz.«'[64]

We can see a similar pattern emerging here. Communication with the castle is impossible. All who would attempt to establish contact with the castle must attempt to find a way through a morass of connections which link with every department and yet simultaneously are heard by none. The final 'dead end' in the 'path' of communication comes on the rare occasions when the telephone is answered: it is 'nichts als Scherz'.

The image of the labyrinth has yet another dimension in the novel. Characters' own perceptions of the castle also take on a labyrinthine quality. The best example must be that of Olga in her lengthy conversation with K.:

---

[64]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 72.

> '»[Diese Langsamkeit im Schloß] kann bedeuten, daß die Sache im Amtsgang ist, sie kann aber auch bedeuten, daß der Amstgang noch gar nicht begonnen hat, ... sie kann aber schließlich auch bedeuten, daß der Amtsgang schon beendet ist,«'[65]

The intricate tortuousness of Olga's thought-patterns is obvious. The castle is inscrutable, a complete enigma, and Olga's painstaking attempts to fathom how it operates closely parallel K.'s own quest. Her thoughts are a constant series of possibilities which are probably only 'dead ends', and there is no way of finding any certainty about approaching the desired goal. Thus the labyrinth is an ideal demonstration of man's helpless wanderings, both literally and in his own mind, as he attempts to reach a central point of orientation, which may not even exist outwith his own mind.

K. soon becomes aware of the labyrinthine nature of his search to find the castle, and it is thus not long before another fundamental issue in the process of the search comes to the fore, namely that of enlisting the help of others to mediate between himself and the castle. For K. (and the village also) the most significant character in this regard is Klamm, since he is by far the most important member of the castle authorities of whom the villagers have heard, and it must be stressed that he is perceived quite explicitly as a mediator, not as an end in himself:

> '... nicht Klamms Nähe an sich war ihm das Erstrebenswerte, sondern daß er, K., nur er ... an Klamm herankam und an ihn herankam, nicht um bei ihm zu ruhen, sondern um an ihm vorbeizukommen, weiter, ins Schloß.'[66]

Klamm is the individual whom K. perceives as capable of acting as mediator between himself and the castle. Furthermore, if the castle is representative of absolute order, then Klamm could be said to *parallel* a principal tenet of Christianity: 'For there is ... one

---

[65]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 166.

[66]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 107. This single-minded desire to enter the castle counters Meno Spann's argument that K.'s goal is no more than 'Meaningful work, and his uncontested right to exist unmolested by official and unofficial hostilities' (*Franz Kafka* (London: George Prior, 1976), p. 152). K.'s interest in being a 'Landvermesser' is for most of the novel all but non-existent anyway.

mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,'[67]. However, Klamm is *not* a Christ figure or an image of Christ's mediation; rather the similarity which exists between the two helps us to understand better the process which K. at least perceives Klamm as being able to undertake on his behalf. Where the parallel breaks down is first in the fact that K. has no regard for Klamm whatsoever, whereas Christianity is built on man's response to Christ, second in the fact that Klamm is as distant and unattainable as the castle itself[68], and third in the fact that, while the villagers attribute some kind of divine status to him[69], there is no actual proof that he is anything other than a human being.

It is crucial that Klamm is as unattainable as the castle. As the direct approach to the castle becomes transferred to an approach to the castle via Klamm, this too becomes transferred, as a second layer of mediation is introduced, to that of mediation between K. and Klamm. The focus now is on Frieda. The landlady of the 'Brückenhof' makes this comment:

> '»Sie haben Frieda aus dem glücklichsten Zustand gerissen, der ihr je beschieden war, ... Sie hat Sie gerettet und sich dabei geopfert.«'[70]

The religious connotations are made particularly explicit here and, while we should be careful not to exaggerate them (the landlady's antipathy towards K. clearly makes her stress very heavily his adverse effect), they are nevertheless significant. K. is interested in Frieda because she is Klamm's mistress; when she leaves Klamm, her usefulness diminishes and he begins to neglect her. Frieda has freely renounced her position as Klamm's lover, which seems to be almost a state of 'grace' for the landlady (and presumably for K. also). Frieda's rôle is however if anything a parody of Christ's act of mediation. K. wants her to act as mediator, certainly, but Frieda is just an ordinary barmaid and former mistress of Klamm. She has no special power or authority and, while

---

[67]I Timothy 2:5, *The Holy Bible*, p. 1192.

[68]Beutner makes the additional point that 'Die Metaphorik legt den unendlichen Abstand zwischen Klamm und K. bloß ... Klamm ist der Adler, ein stolzer Vogel' (Beutner, p. 225, and *Das Schloß*, p. 112).

[69]This is what Frieda does when she says '»Im Namen Klamms«' (Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 42). See also above, p. 97.

[70]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 55.

K. believed to have in her a '»Pfand ..., das nur zum höchsten Preise ausgelöst werden könne«',[71] the idea of one ordinary human being relying on another ordinary human being to intercede with Klamm in order to reach the castle is nonsensical. In addition, since Klamm, while apparently possessing considerable power and authority, is also probably no more divine than anyone else[72], the hopeless nature of K.'s desire for a mediator becomes painfully clear. As K.'s effort to reach the castle progresses, he is forced more and more into an exclusively human, earthly situation, drawn further and further from his goal.

The process of one person mediating for another becomes, after K.'s abandonment of Frieda, rather more a situation of mutual interdependence as K., Olga and Barnabas seem to perceive their situations in similar terms:

> '... daß er hier Menschen fand, denen es, wenigstens äußerlich, sehr ähnlich ging wie ihm selbst,'[73]

Similarly, Olga says the following about the possibly encouraging nature of Barnabas' being used as a messenger:

> '»Diese Wendung, wenn es eine Wendung ist und keine Täuschung ..., ist mit deiner Ankunft hier im Zusammenhang,«'[74]

As the situation becomes ever more desperate, since the search seems continually to be leading further away from the castle rather than towards it, so the characters merely cling to each other in a last attempt to make some sort of progress, which is most likely to be deceptive and illusory.

---

[71]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 149.

[72]While Klamm is named frequently in the novel and does appear to exist, we see very little of the man himself. As Peter West Nutting comments, 'What makes K.'s preoccupation with Klamm laughable is his blindness to the fact that behind the name there is very little of substance' ('Kafka's "Strahlende Heiterkeit": Discursive Humor and Comic Narration in *Das Schloß*', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 57 (1983), 661).

[73]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 170.

[74]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 217.

While K.'s commitment to his quest is considerable, it is also characterised by sporadic interruptions, when he is side-tracked by his more mundane desires. Frieda is not seen purely as a potential mediator between K. and Klamm: she is also a person in her own right, and for K. more particularly a person who awakens his physical desires. These desires constitute little more than primitive lust, with little concern for the individual which is Frieda:

> 'Sie umfaßten einander, ... sie rollten in einer Besinnungslosigkeit, aus der sich K. fortwährend, aber vergeblich, zu retten suchte, ... und lagen dann in den kleinen Pfützen Biers und dem sonstigen Unrat, ... Dort vergingen Stunden, ... in denen K. immerfort das Gefühl hatte, er verirre sich oder er sei so weit in der Fremde, wie vor ihm noch kein Mensch, einer Fremde, ... in der man vor Fremdheit ersticken müsse'[75]

The rôle of eroticism will be analysed more fully later, along with any usage of erotic involvement to further K.'s cause. What is more important here is that 'normal' activities of life cannot be disregarded. In addition, the brutally physical, sordid aspect stands in stark contrast to K.'s existential struggles. The lack of love is also prominent. What is especially interesting is however the final comment quoted above, where there is an image of becoming lost in a situation which is threatening to his very existence[76]. In Kafka's world, the male-female relationship seems no more than a trivial shallow side-track which is likely to hinder man's quest for the Absolute. Despite this, however, the comment is made later in the same paragraph that K. is 'ängstlich-glücklich ..., denn es schien ihm, wenn Frieda ihn verlasse, verlasse ihn alles, was er habe'[77]. This in isolation suggests that Frieda *is* in fact a mediator and that K. ought to be dependent on her. But what does K. have at this stage? A night in the beer puddles with a barmaid who has been Klamm's lover! The pointlessness of the relationship is clearly the stronger current within the novel.

---

[75]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, pp. 43-4.

[76]Politzer suggests that the 'Fremde' in which K. finds himself is the 'alien land ... which lies within K. himself' ('The Alienated Self — A Key to Franz Kafka's *Castle*?', *Michigan Quarterly Review*, 14 (1975), 403).

[77]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 44.

K.'s search takes on a further twist: there is the potential 'wahre Weg' as set out by Bürgel in chapter eighteen. According to Bürgel, the one who wishes to enter the castle should intrude upon an official of the castle during the night, as K. has just done. Under these circumstances Bürgel claims that '»die notwendige Schranke zwischen Parteien und Beamten ... lockert sich,«'[78], that is, it is suggested that the inner sanctuary of the castle is now open. But Bürgel smiles 'als sei es ihm eben gelungen, K. ein wenig irrezuführen'[79], and even if he is not trying to deceive K., K. is too exhausted to take any notice anyway. So this 'true' process of searching is at best highly equivocal.

There is one final possibility for the search, and that is stated in the last, unfinished chapter, in K.'s long conversation with Pepi:

> '»[es] taucht mir etwas Derartiges auf, so, als ob wir uns beide zu sehr, zu lärmend, zu kindisch, zu unerfahren bemüht hätten, um etwas, das zum Beispiel mit Friedas Ruhe, mit Friedas Sachlichkeit leicht und unmerklich zu gewinnen ist, durch Weinen, durch Kratzen, durch Zerren zu bekommen — «'[80]

There is a strong suggestion here that K. now believes he should have approached his search with a greater degree of personal maturity on his part[81], combined with some kind of act of 'grace' on the castle's part ('leicht und unmerklich', as if it were somehow

---

[78]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 248.

[79]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 248. See also above, p. 101.

[80]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, pp. 291-2.

[81]Gray centres his theological interpretation on a change in K.'s temperament following his interview with Bürgel. Gray claims that K. finds a new feeling of peace and harmony when he ceases his aggressive assault on the castle, merely allowing it to work upon him and thus permitting a 'miracle' (p. 81), where K. enters a state of 'grace' (p. 120). More or less the same point is made by Hoffmann (*«Ansturm gegen die letzte irdische Grenze»*, pp. 257-8). K. certainly exhibits a change of temperament, and he feels a degree of peace as he stands in the corridor of the 'Herrenhof' immediately after the interview with Bürgel. ('Er fühlte sich fast wohl inmitten des Getriebes,' (Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 260).) That peace in the corridor is however countered by the landlord's and landlady's horror that K. should have the audacity to stand there for so long, and, as for what K. says to Pepi, there is no evidence that he is correct in his new assumptions. He could be as deluded as before. Sokel (p. 248) makes the further valid point that the last chapters 'gehören ... zu den düstersten und traurigsten des fragmentarischen Romans'.

bestowed upon him). The final irony is however at hand: if this is true, K. does not seem to have long to live[82] and in any case Frieda has achieved nothing more than the dizzy heights of barmaid[83]! The result of the search seems to point only towards despair.

---

[82]See Brod, 'Nachwort zur ersten Ausgabe', in Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 347.

[83]There is also no guarantee that K. is right in his assertion: it is after all no more than his opinion.

The Result of the Search

The final result of K.'s quest for order, i.e., failure, is by now apparent, but a series of 'results' actually takes place within the novel, each of which anticipates the final outcome. The opening three chapters set the agenda for the whole of K.'s search: the labyrinth image is introduced, together with the desire for others to mediate for him and the image of mirrors[84], and the inevitability of K.'s defeat. The first direct response from the castle is the following:

> 'Das »Nein!« der Antwort hörte K. bis zu seinem Tisch. Die Antwort war aber noch ausführlicher, sie lautete: »Weder morgen noch ein andermal.«'[85]

Perhaps the most striking thing about this comment is that it is entirely accurate. Despite all his numerous attempts, K. never once enters the castle; in fact, the closest he ever comes is to the 'Herrenhof', which, as Politzer reminds us, 'is also on the village street'[86]. This emphatic refusal of the castle even to entertain the idea of allowing K. to enter determines the entire progression of the novel, and leaves the reader in no doubt as to the likelihood of K.'s ultimate defeat.

Nevertheless K. does not give up, and there is one stage in which he almost thinks he is achieving some form of victory, namely when he waits for Klamm in his sleigh in the yard of the 'Herrenhof'. But Klamm will never appear while K. is there:

> '... da schien es K., als habe man nun alle Verbindung mit ihm abgebrochen und als sei er nun freilich freier als jemals ...; aber ... als gäbe es gleichzeitig nichts Sinnloseres, nichts Verzweifelteres als diese Freiheit, dieses Warten,

---

[84]Politzer (*Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox*, p. 237) comments on the first instance of the mirror device as being the letter from the castle in chapter two which 'does not authorize his position, it only reflects his arrival'.

[85]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 24.

[86]Politzer, *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox*, p. 229. Hartmut Binder (*Kafka in neuer Sicht: Mimik, Gestik und Personengefüge als Darstellungsformen des Autobiographischen* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1976), p. 294) points out there is something 'castle-like' about the 'Herrenhof', with its numerous offices and storeys, arguing that 'das Wirtshaus jenes [das Schloß] repräsentiert'. I think however Binder has allowed the similarities to blind him to the fact that the castle and the inn are quite clearly physically two separate entities.

diese Unverletzlichkeit.'[87]

K. has achieved some kind of goal of freedom, but he is only free because 'alle Verbindung mit ihm' has been 'abgebrochen'. Did K. not want to enter the castle? Why, then, should the severing of contact with it be something positive? We are reminded on the one hand that he always wanted to be 'frei' in case the castle did not 'suit' him[88], but on the other hand the essential point is that his freedom is meaningless; more than that, it is freedom to exist in a world of existential nothingness.

It is worthwhile to compare K.'s situation with that of Olga's and Barnabas' sister Amalia. Amalia is an entirely unique character in the novel. Her only activity is her tending of her parents, and yet she does maintain a significant presence in the book. The very first time K. sees her he is struck by her 'ernsten, geraden, unrührbaren, vielleicht auch etwas stumpfen Blick'[89]. She is always portrayed as being entirely alone:

'[Ihr Blick] war nicht geradezu auf das gerichtet, was sie beobachtete, sondern ging ... daran vorbei, es schien ... ein fortwährendes, jedem anderen Gefühl überlegenes Verlangen nach Einsamkeit,'[90]

For Amalia, human contact is meaningless and pointless, and she does not live, she merely exists. The cause of her present situation is the Sortini episode when she rejects the demand made to her[91]. While her behaviour is not catastrophic — there is never any direct physical threat to anyone — her family is nevertheless condemned (or condemns itself) to the same separation from society which she endures or even longs for. So what in this episode has such significant effects for her and her family? Olga has this to say about her sister:

---

[87]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 103.

[88]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 11.

[89]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 35.

[90]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 161.

[91]Marjanne E. Goozé argues that Amalia's shredding of the letter from Sortini is her 'denial of texts and textual systems' ('Texts, Textuality, and Silence in Franz Kafka's *Das Schloß*', *Modern Language Notes*, 98 (1983), 349), but her 'denial' is more a denial of what the letter *says* (i.e., Sortini's instruction) rather than 'textual systems' in general terms.

> '»Aber Amalia trug nicht nur das Leid, sondern hatte auch den Verstand, es zu durchschauen, wir sahen nur die Folgen, sie sah in den Grund, ... Aug in Aug mit der Wahrheit stand sie und lebte«'[92]

In Politzer's terms, she 'read in Sortini's eyes a secret, the secret of the castle'[93]. The accuracy of Olga's perception is by no means guaranteed: we do not have the evidence of the letter, only Olga's commentary, and she admits she did not understand it fully[94]. In addition, if Amalia did recognise Sortini's secret that is not in itself proof that it is the ultimate secret of the castle. Nevertheless we are forced to grant it some validity. That being the case, Amalia finds in the castle neither divine grace, which would have given her life meaning, peace and harmony, or the epitome of evil, which would have driven her to the depths of despair, even death. What she finds is an empty nothingness, a void which does not destroy her but condemns her to carry on living, faithless and loveless[95]. The search for the lost Absolute in the case of *Das Schloß*, then, only confirms its irrevocable loss[96]: for Kafka, man lives in a world without order[97].

---

[92]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 200.

[93]Politzer, *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox*, p. 271.

[94]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, pp. 183-4.

[95]See also Politzer, *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox*, p. 272. David Anderson (*The Tragic Protest: A Christian Study of Some Modern Literature* (London: SCM Press, 1969), p. 116) discusses the rôle of Amalia and argues that 'the power of the castle exists only in the minds of those who believe in it', but fails to point out the tragedy of being condemned to live on in such a meaningless world.

[96]See also Charles I. Glicksberg, *The Tragic Vision in Twentieth Century Literature* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963), especially pp. 48-9.

[97]Basing his argument on the comic elements in the novel, Franz Kuna contends that 'life must not become a human tragedy but some kind of divine comedy' (*Kafka: Literature as Corrective Punishment* (London: Elek Books, 1974), p. 167). While I agree that the comic elements (especially the behaviour of the assistants) should not be ignored, I think this is something of an exaggeration.

Luis Cernuda

The Reasons for Searching

Cernuda, exiled from Spain as a result of the Civil War[98] and resident in the United Kingdom between 1938 and 1947, had a bitter sense of disorientation, exile and alienation from society, far more so than ever before, and as a result began to seek solace in Christianity, partial evidence of which has been seen in the hopeful ending of his poem 'Lázaro' from *Las nubes*[99]. Cernuda's search for absolute order finds its most powerful expression in the poems 'La visita de Dios', 'Atardecer en la catedral' and 'La adoración de los Magos' from *Las Nubes*, and 'Las ruinas' from *Como quien espera el alba.*

We have seen how in *Das Schloß* K. knows he wants to seek the castle (enigmatic entity though it is) and arrives in the village believing in its existence. Cernuda, however, has to develop into the situation where he can believe there is a form of absolute order to be sought. We have already discussed the existential/metaphysical significance of some poems from Cernuda's earlier collections, but it is not until *Las Nubes* that the basis for Cernuda's search for the Absolute is explored most fully. Cernuda's desperation is particularly apparent in the poem 'La visita de Dios'. The poem opens with an observation that 'Pasada se halla ahora la mitad de mi vida'[100]. This awareness of mortality, combined with his obvious despair, has very clear parallels with the situation of Thomas Buddenbrook. Cernuda then expresses his need for divine consolation (much more explicitly than either Thomas Buddenbrook or K. in *Das Schloß*) at the end of the first stanza:

---

[98]While the Civil War had a profound effect on Cernuda's life, it has a negligible presence in *La realidad y el deseo*, despite Juventino Caminero's valiant attempts to prove otherwise ('Luis Cernuda como poeta comprometido en la guerra civil española', *Letras de Deusto*, 16, No. 35 (1986), 53-70).

[99]See above, p. 81. Harris, in a fascinating article on the poem 'A un poeta muerto (F.G.L.)' from *Las Nubes*, discovers that drafts of the poem demonstrate that 'it is possible to antedate the concern with Christianity to the beginning of the Civil War' ('A Primitive Version of Luis Cernuda's Elegy on the Death of Lorca', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 50 (1973), 369).

[100]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 274.

'Como el labrador al ver su trabajo perdido
Vuelve al cielo los ojos esperando la lluvia,
También quiero esperar en esta hora confusa
Unas lágrimas divinas que aviven mi cosecha.'[101]

As the farmer longs for rain to fall on a dry, parched land[102], so Cernuda now recognises a need for God, and yearns for order in his 'hora confusa'. The metaphor of the 'lágrimas divinas' not only links with the rain of the previous line but also echoes the tears of Christ, for example in the Garden of Gethsemane, the supreme example of the Deity identifying with man.

While it is true that in Cernuda's poetry of this period we do not see as strong a spirit of aggression which so characterises K. in *Das Schloß*, nevertheless that same existential need which drives K. also drives Cernuda. Thus we read in the fifth stanza of 'La visita de Dios':

'Por mi dolor comprendo que otros inmensos sufren
Hombres callados a quienes falta el ocio
Para arrojar al cielo su tormento. Mas no puedo
Copiar su enérgico silencio, que me alivia
Este consuelo de la voz, sin tierra y sin amigo,
En la profunda soledad de quien no tiene

---

[101]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 274.

[102]The imagery of these lines bears a considerable amount in common (consciously or unconsciously) with Machado's 'Poema de un día' from *Campos de Castilla*. Like 'La visita de Dios', Machado's poem opens with the persona taking stock of his life. It then continues as follows:

'Fantástico labrador,
pienso en los campos. ¡Señor
qué bien haces! Llueve, llueve
tu agua constante y menuda
sobre alcaceles y habares,
tu agua muda,
en viñedos y olivares.'

(Antonio Machado, *Poesías completas*, ed. Manuel Alvar, 17th ed. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1993), p. 218.) Edward M. Wilson compares 'La visita de Dios' with another of Machado's poems, 'Del pasado efímero', also from *Campos de Castilla*, where the imagery is again very similar ('Cernuda's Debts', in *Studies in Modern Spanish Literature and Art Presented to Helen F. Grant*, ed. Nigel Glendinning (London: Tamesis, 1972), p. 247, and Machado, pp. 224-5).

Ya nada entre sus brazos, sino el aire en torno,'[103]

With a vivid image of having nothing around him besides the air, Cernuda expresses the 'profunda soledad' which deprives his existence of all meaning. There is also an unusually vehement tone in the third line when he uses the phrase 'arrojar al cielo', suggesting a bitter frustration which must erupt in a demand to the heavens for intervention in human life. (This incidentally is not unreminiscent of K.'s spirit of aggression.) Cernuda cannot duplicate the 'enérgico silencio' of other people: his being depends on breaking the silence, on making supplication to the heavens[104].

'La adoración de los Magos' from *Las Nubes* deals explicitly with the search for order. Stylistically this poem is unusual in Cernuda's creative *œuvre*, since it is a narrative, in contrast to the more usual lyrical style (although there are more narratives in his later poetry than his earlier poetry). The poem tells the story of the Magi coming to worship the Christ child[105]. As with the opening of Kafka's novel, we are presented with the search already underway. The poem is introduced by Melchor, who exhibits the greatest faith and encourages the other two to continue. Melchor expresses his faith in the first section:

'Hombres que duermen
Y de un sueño de siglos Dios despierta.
Que enciendan las hogueras en los montes,
Llevando el fuego rápido la nueva
A las lindes de reinos tributarios.

---

[103]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 275.

[104]These lines are reminiscent of the opening lines of Francisco de Aldana's sonnet 'Mil veces callo...', although, while the images are similar, in Aldana's poem it is the persona himself who is silent:

'Mil veces callo que romper deseo
el cielo a gritos, y otras tantas tiento
dar a mi lengua voz y movimiento
que en silencio mortal yacer la veo.'

(*Poesías castellanas completas*, ed. José Lara Garrido (Madrid: Cátedra, 1985), p. 389.)

[105]Cernuda actually uses the legend of the three Kings as opposed to the Biblical story of an unknown number of Magi. (C.f. Matthew 2, *The Holy Bible*, p. 966.) There are also echoes of Eliot's 'Journey of the Magi' (see Maristany, p. 77, and Fernando Ortiz, 'T. S. Eliot en Cernuda', *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, No. 416 (1985), 104).

Al alba he de partir.'[106]

Melchor is profoundly committed to seeking God. The enthusiasm with which he wishes the news of God's intervention to be broadcast is captured in his desire that fires be lit on the hill-tops. (Fire also echoes his own passion and depth of feeling.) The sign of God's 'waking' of men from their 'slumber' suggests further that God is alive, although this will be countered at the end of the poem. In addition, as is the case with K., everything else becomes subordinated to the quest, illustrated by the comment 'Al alba he de partir': the serene night scene of the opening stanza of the poem cannot and must not be his final resting-place.

Melchor's faith is only part of the picture. In the same way that K. says '»Ich will immer frei sein«'[107], so too here there is doubt as to the worth of proceeding. While the poem deals ostensibly with three separate individuals, nevertheless 'all three project certain particular aspects of the poet's contradictory self'[108], consequently bringing both the doubt and the faith very close together. Thus at the beginning of the second section, Baltasar says the following:

'Tras una estrella incierta vamos, ...
...
Buscamos la verdad, aunque verdades en abstracto son cosa innecesaria,
Lujo de soñadores,'[109]

Baltasar's attitude is characterised by scepticism. He lacks any real conviction, and takes the view that the concepts of Absolutes are irrelevant to existence. Man in his opinion should only concern himself with the realities of immediate necessity. In Harris' terminology, he is the believer in *Realpolitik*[110]. Gaspar, meanwhile, takes a different view again:

---

[106]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 300.

[107]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 11.

[108]Coleman, *Other Voices*, p. 105. See also Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 83, and Jenaro Talens, *El espacio y las máscaras: Introducción a la lectura de Cernuda* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1975), p. 103.

[109]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 301.

[110]Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 83.

'Un cuerpo virgen junto al lecho aguarda desnudo, temeroso,
Los brazos del amante, cuando a la madrugada penetra y duele el gozo.
Esto es la vida. ¿Qué importan la verdad o el poder junto a esto?'[111]

Gaspar is happy to ignore thoughts of the eternal and be side-tracked into the indulgence of physical desires. Just as K. is prepared sporadically to forget his quest and seek gratification with Frieda, so too Cernuda is torn by a desire merely to live for the moment. Thus the search is seen for Cernuda, as it was in *Das Schloß*, as being eternally valid and yet simultaneously of questionable relevance.

Like Thomas Buddenbrook, Cernuda's personae are despairing, and also ageing and 'metaphysisch bedürftig'; like K. there is commitment to a quest which may or may not be valid. But what do Cernuda's personae hope of their search? An indication of Cernuda's hope can be ascertained if we return briefly to 'La visita de Dios':

'Mira las tristes piedras que llevamos
Ya sobre nuestros hombros para enterrar tus dones:
La hermosura, la verdad, la justicia, cuyo afán imposible
Tú sólo eras capaz de infundir en nosotros.'[112]

Only God can inspire the desire for 'beauty, truth and justice', but, crucially, the verb is in a past tense, i.e., 'eras'. This in itself indicates that this poem is a desperate cry to a Deity in which Cernuda has very little faith. He is weary and burdened by life and sees, or at least hopes to see, in Christianity potential relief from them. There is however a sense that, regardless of how positive these virtues may be, the strain of life may actually be greater than the 'gifts' which God once offered. This is suggested by the curious phrase 'para enterrar tus dones': Cernuda seems to suggest that the pain of life in the modern world is such that it imposes a burden on man for which the knowledge of God could no longer compensate effectively.

---

[111]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 302.

[112]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 277.

The spiritual benefits for which Cernuda hopes are explored further in 'Atardecer en la catedral', where he contemplates the tranquil scene of the sanctuary. The overriding impression is one of peace:

'Como un sueño de piedra, de música callada,
Desde la flecha erguida de la torre
Hasta la lonja de anchas losas grises,
La catedral extática aparece,
Toda reposo: vidrio, madera, bronce,
Fervor puro a la sombra de los siglos.'[113]

These lines are in contrast to the misery and alienation in 'La visita de Dios'. The principal difference is that whereas the focus of 'La visita de Dios' was Cernuda himself, in this poem the central point of orientation is the *cathedral*, an inanimate entity which merely represents what it in itself is not, and the seed of doubt is once again sown by the use of the words 'Como un sueño': even here there is a tinge of unreality. The poem however continues, concentrating on the peacefulness:

'Aquí encuentran la paz los hombres vivos,
Paz de los odios, paz de los amores,
Olvido dulce y largo, donde el cuerpo
Fatigado se baña en las tinieblas.'[114]

It is not just release from pain which is indicated in these lines, but also a release from *all* feelings. Cernuda's desire thus seems to be a quest for a kind of limbo or oblivion, which, Harris reminds us[115], is not uncommon within his poetry, and frequently has positive overtones[116]. There is nevertheless a negative colouring to this which occurs slightly later

---

[113]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 282.

[114]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 283.

[115]Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 81.

[116]For example, in 'La música' from the collection of prose poetry *Ocnos*, the absorption in the music leads to 'la región última del olvido' (*Poesía completa*, p. 585). See also Kevin J[ohn] Bruton, 'The Romantic and Post-Romantic Theme of Poetic Space as Exemplified in the Poetry of Luis Cernuda', in *Space and Boundaries in Literature*, Vol. III of *Proceedings of the Twelfth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*, ed. R. Bauer, D. Fokkema and M. de Graat (München: Iudicum, 1990), pp. 353-4. Interestingly, this is also an idea which Cernuda has in common with T. S. Eliot (C. G. Bellver, 'Luis

in the poem:

'No hay lucha ni temor, no hay pena ni deseo.
Todo queda aceptado hasta la muerte
Y olvidado tras de la muerte, contemplando,
Libre del cuerpo, y adorando,
Necesidad del alma exenta de deleite.'[117]

The tinge of doubt occurs in the last line above, i.e., 'exenta de deleite'. We understand his desire for peace, and certainly the theme of indolence is present as a positive concept in *La realidad y el deseo*, especially for example in *Primeras Poesías*[118], but nevertheless we suspect that the absence of joy will result in an emotional state which is no more acceptable than the pain he feels at the moment[119]: it is evasion rather than a lasting solution. Thus there is a strong indication that the benefit which Cernuda hopes to gain from his quest will be at best of only limited value.

Cernuda and T. S. Eliot: A Kinship of Message and Motifs', *Revista de estudios hispánicos*, 17 (1983), 113).

[117]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 283. These lines, together with the previous ones quoted, are reminiscent of the sentiment expressed in Luis de León's 'Vida retirada':

'Vivir quiero conmigo;
gozar quiero del bien que debo al cielo,
a solas, sin testigo,
libre de amor, de celo,
de odio, de esperanzas, de recelo.'

(*Poesía lírica del siglo de oro*, ed. Elias L. Rivers, 7th ed. (Madrid: Cátedra, 1985), p. 113.)

[118]See for example poem III of *Primeras poesías* (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 108-9).

[119]The indolence in *Primeras Poesías* is matched by an equally strong desire to experience love, as for example in poem VII:

'Mas no quiero estos muros,
Aire infiel a sí mismo,
Ni esas ramas que cantan
En el aire dormido.

Quiero como horizonte
Para mi muda gloria
Tus brazos,'

(Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 111.)

The Goal of the Search

Cernuda's goal is explicitly an experience of the Christian God (although there is a tendency within Cernuda's poetry to include and assimilate concepts more suited to the gods of Antiquity[120]). Thus Cernuda's goal is much more clearly defined than is K.'s, although it is far from irrelevant to investigate, first, what Cernuda perceives God to be like, and second, the extent to which individual's own perceptions are more important than the Absolute's actual nature.

When we analysed *Das Schloß* we recognised that positive and negative elements are both present at once in the castle. Cernuda's concept of God is however more definitively positive: divine grace is explicit within poems of *Las Nubes*, most especially in 'Cordura'. Much of 'Cordura' is written in a tone of extreme sadness, with the persona looking out through a window. There are 'El campo amortecido' (stanza one) and 'un edén perdido' (stanza three), together with a sense that the persona is excluded from what he sees outside, both from these negative qualities and from the positive 'manos amigas' of men working outside[121]. The climax of the poem is perhaps the eleventh stanza:

> 'Duro es hallarse solo
> En medio de los cuerpos.
> Pero esa forma tiene
> Su amor: la cruz sin nadie.'[122]

There is a reiteration of Cernuda's sense of alienation and there is an indication of the antidote thereto, i.e., the image of the empty Cross, the supreme symbol of God's intervention in human life[123]. The Resurrection is the expression of new life, new

---

[120]See for example 'Resaca en Sansueña', set between two explicitly Christian-inspired poems, 'La visita de Dios' and 'Atardecer en la catedral' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 277-81).

[121]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 284-5. This sadness at exclusion from both positive and negative qualities must again call into question the validity of the 'limbo' desired in 'Atardecer en la catedral'.

[122]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 286.

[123]See also Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 81.

meaning, direct contact with absolute order. The following would then be the result of this new perspective:

> 'Por ese amor espero,
> Despierto en su regazo,
> Hallar un alba pura
> Comunión con los hombres.'[124]

Faith in the Absolute is the key to establishing new relationships with other people: the 'pure dawn' of life in a world which is harmonious, where the poet is not excluded from paradise. This is the 'Himmelreich' that the castle ought to have been. It is indeed this very stanza which is evidence that the search is indicative of a genuinely metaphysical concern. It is not for instance merely symbolic of Cernuda's sense of physical exile. If the concern were only with the loss of his homeland, then a return to it would obviously be enough to alleviate that. What is expressed in these lines, however, is precisely that the sense of loneliness and isolation could (it is hoped) be relieved by finding faith in a personal God which would then affect the rest of his life. Any need to return to Spain (or indeed for anything else) would thus fade into insignificance.

God's nature is expounded further in the long poem 'La adoración de los Magos' by Melchor, the one figure who truly believes:

> 'No hay poder sino en Dios, en Dios sólo perdura la delicia;
> El mar fuerte es su brazo, la luz alegre su sonrisa.'[125]

God embodies 'power' and 'lasting delight', i.e., a profound joy which transcends all mere earthly pleasures. The two ideas are reiterated in the second line in images: the popular images of the strength of the sea to represent power and light to represent joy. If we compare these aspects with the castle, we are reminded that the castle was indeed powerful and exerted authority over the village. The light of joy however is absent in *Das Schloß*; indeed, the alleged 'miracle' which Bürgel offers takes place in a basement room

---

[124]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 286.

[125]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 302.

in the middle of the night.

The final significant positive aspect of God's character is stated slightly later in the same poem, again by Melchor, when he says the following:

> 'Abandonad el oro y los perfumes, que el oro pesa y los aromas aniquilan.
> Adonde brilla desnuda la verdad nada se necesita.'[126]

The first line here, while clearly referring to the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh which the Magi were bringing, is also reminiscent of Christ's injunction not to 'store up for yourselves treasures on earth'[127], but instead to concentrate on the eternal, which is the realm of 'truth'. We saw earlier the claim of infallibility imputed to the castle[128], and here there can be no doubt that it is in God that everything is genuinely 'right'. Additionally we grasp in these lines something of the completeness and perfection of God: nothing besides is required.

Alongside the positive endorsement of faith in God there is however a parallel negative current. It is one of the main negative traits in *Das Schloß*, i.e., indifference[129], as is evident in the closing stanza of 'La visita de Dios':

> 'Compadécete al fin, escucha este murmullo
> Que ascendiendo llega como una ola
> Al pie de tu divina indiferencia.'[130]

The gulf between God and humanity is plain[131], but, simultaneously, in the midst of his despair, Cernuda makes the injunction to God to condescend to come amongst mankind. God however is presented as not interested, and likely to ignore such an injunction. This idea is developed in the later poem 'Las ruinas' from *Como quien espera el alba*:

---

[126]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 302.

[127]Matthew 6:19, *The Holy Bible*, p. 971.

[128]See above, p. 98.

[129]See above, p. 100.

[130]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 276.

[131]See also above, p. 71.

'Oh Dios. Tú que nos has hecho
Para morir, ¿por qué nos infundiste
La sed de eternidad, que hace al poeta?
¿Puedes dejar así, siglo tras siglo,
Caer como vilanos que deshace un soplo
Los hijos de la luz en la tiniebla avara?'[132]

While this poem deals primarily with the loss of faith, nevertheless we should not discount it, because Cernuda's faith was a very wavering one. If we compare this stanza with the comments of Melchor in 'La adoración de los Magos', it is striking that, whereas Melchor sees the light of joy, here man is deserted by God to wander in 'la tiniebla avara'. Despite the fact that this poem is written after the 'desengaño' of 'La adoración de los Magos', nevertheless the understanding of the Absolute is one of tension between the desire to believe in divine grace and a severe doubt that God, if He exists, cares about man. This tension is echoed in the meditation on the gods of Antiquity 'Resaca en Sansueña', interposed between 'La visita de Dios' and 'Atardecer en la catedral'. Here the despairing comment is made: 'Ninguna voz responde a la pena del hombre,'[133]. Thus, while Cernuda's God is not evil in the way that Sortini is and the poetry lacks the doom-laden atmosphere of Kafka's castle, yet it is clear that He, like the castle, seems remote and unattainable.

There is one principal element of this topic which we have as yet not discussed, and that is the idea that God is, for Cernuda, an image on to which he projects his own desires and longings. This is first broached at the end of 'La visita de Dios':

'Si ellas [la hermosura, la verdad, la justicia] murieran hoy, de la memoria tú
te borrarías
Como un sueño remoto de los hombres que fueron.'[134]

Harris interprets these lines as an 'Unamunesque God's dependence on man for His

---

[132]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 325.

[133]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 281.

[134]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 277.

existence'[135]. The evidence of God's existence is not so much His own being, but the presence of beauty, truth and justice. If God is effaced by the lack of such virtues, then it is a short step to asserting that these virtues are not proof of His existence, but that His existence is deduced from them, i.e., God is seen as a *projection of man's desire* to interpret the universe as ordered and structured.

This concept of the projection of the individual's own ideas is developed in 'La adoración de los Magos'. Each character has his own perception of that which he is seeking. The search can be interpreted as nothing more than a reflection of each man's goals and desires. This aspect clearly invites comparison with *Das Schloß*: the castle, in accordance with the labyrinthine structure of K.'s quest, is as much a mirror of K.'s and the villagers' own perceptions as an entity in its own right, and, as Olga comments, '»So arbeiten die Leute an ihrer eigenen Verwirrung.«'[136] In a similar way, Cernuda's own image of God is essentially a mirror of all his own highly complex and contradictory thoughts and feelings, and God Himself is at best of secondary importance. Cernuda finally recognises this in the poem 'Las ruinas':

'Mas tú no existes. Eres tan sólo el nombre
Que da el hombre a su miedo y su impotencia,'[137]

This is the explicit acknowledgement that, as far as Cernuda is concerned, while he has desired faith, the concept of God is one which he uses as a means of giving form and expression to what lies deep within him, and the contradictory elements of grace and indifference and the tension between doubt and faith merely elements of his desperate struggle to come to terms emotionally and psychologically with his isolated existence in exile[138]. As the illusion is a source of confusion in *Das Schloß*, so too for Cernuda it is an

---

[135]Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 82. See also Eloy Sánchez Rosillo, *La fuerza del destino: Vida y poesía de Luis Cernuda* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 1992), p. 132.

[136]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 174

[137]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 325.

[138]There is at least a degree of truth in María Dolores Arana's comment that God 'es el ser con el que habla Cernuda cuando no habla con nadie' ('Sobre Luis Cernuda', in *Luis Cernuda*, ed. Harris, p. 181), although this still does not discount the genuine nature of Cernuda's *desire* for faith at this time. 'Las ruinas' is rather a later recognition of his own lack of faith.

image which cannot have lasting significance. There is thus a strong indication that the goal is in itself ephemeral.

The Process of Searching

How does Cernuda set about his search? Perhaps the first comment to make is the commitment made to it, seen most explicitly in 'La adoración de los Magos'. We know already that Melchor has a profound belief in his goal, but what have they all invested in their search? This aspect is illustrated by the following words of Baltasar:

> 'Como pastores nómadas, cuando hiere la espada del invierno,
> Tras una estrella incierta vamos, atravesando de noche los desiertos,
> Acampados de día junto al muro de alguna ciudad muerta,
> Donde aúllan chacales: mientras, abandonada nuestra tierra,
> Sale su cetro a plaza,'[139]

Like K. of *Das Schloß*, the Magi have abandoned all that they know to embark on a long and difficult journey, leaving behind all certainty and not knowing if it will ever be possible to return. There is a particularly strong impression in these lines of a long, arduous, disorientating journey, with the howling of the jackals lending a note of eerie desolation. For all his pessimism and belief in opportunist politics, it is nevertheless clear that Baltasar must also have a considerable degree of commitment, for, even although Melchor is clearly the leader, Baltasar too has undertaken the journey. In this way it can be seen that the quest is only begun proper when the person can renounce everything for it.

The fundamental difference in the process of searching between the poetry of Cernuda and Kafka's novel is the fact that, while the image of the labyrinth is clearly incorporated into *Das Schloß*, it is not evident in Cernuda's poetry. This does not however detract from the difficulty which is very much a part of it. Attention has already been drawn to the distance the Magi have travelled, and thus to physical difficulty, but if we consider the spiritual level, we should look again at the poem 'Cordura':

> 'Por ese amor espero,

---

[139]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 301.

Despierto en su regazo,
Hallar un alba pura
Comunión con los hombres.

Mas la luz deja el campo.
Es tarde y nace el frío.
Cerrada está la puerta,
Alumbrando la lámpara.

Por las sendas sombrías
Se duele el viento ahora
Como alma aislada en lucha.
La noche será breve.'[140]

Following the affirmation of divine love, as symbolised in the 'cruz sin nadie' of earlier in the poem, Cernuda looks forward to a new idyllic relationship with others which should follow his being reunited with God. But this is immediately followed by the line 'Mas la luz deja el campo', given emphasis by its position as a single bald sentence at the beginning of a stanza. Before he may see the dawn, night must come, the 'alma aíslada' must be in 'lucha', and, even although the overriding sentiment is one of hope in the poem with the last line 'La noche será breve', nevertheless it is not yet a reality. K. is physically separate from the castle and cannot communicate with it. Cernuda's Magi are physically separated from God, and the persona of 'Cordura' can as yet communicate neither with God, nor with other people. What is lacking from Cernuda's vision is the intricate tortuousness, but clearly little else.

There is one element in Cernuda's quest for God which has much in common with K.'s search, and that is mediation. While K. seeks Klamm to mediate between himself and the castle, and then Frieda to mediate between himself and Klamm, Cernuda (or his personae) seek Christ, 'the one mediator between God and man'[141]. Potentially, the Risen Christ of 'Cordura' can fulfil this rôle and allow Cernuda 'comunión con los hombres', but that is not the only aspect of this theme. In 'La adoración de los Magos',

---

[140]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 286.

[141]I Timothy 2:5, *The Holy Bible*, p. 1192.

this is the child the Magi find:

> 'Un niño entre sus brazos la mujer guardaba.
> Esperamos un dios, una presencia
> Radiante e imperiosa, cuya vista es la gracia,
> Y cuya privación idéntica a la noche
> Del amante celoso sin la amada.'[142]

This is the 'desengaño' in Cernuda's search for God. The Magi are characterised by their own perceptions of what the Christ child ought to have been. They expected to find the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, who would be able to rescue mankind from its misery, expressed in the vivid image of a jealous lover abandoned by his beloved. Life without the God they expected would be typified by an acute solitude combined with an all-consuming longing for what had been missed. But all they find is an ordinary child, in exactly the same way that Klamm is just an official and Frieda is just a barmaid:

> 'Hallamos una vida como la nuestra humana,
> Gritando lastimosa, con ojos que miraban
> Dolientes, bajo el peso de su alma
> Sometida al destino de las almas,'[143]

If we take *Das Schloß* and 'La adoración de los Magos' together, we begin to recognise that the process of K.'s search for the castle does parallel an *explicit* search for God: man seeks desperately for the Absolute and in doing so places his hope in the ability of someone to act as a bridge between the two spheres of the earthly and the eternal. But rather than finding Christ the Saviour all he encounters is someone in a situation no less pitiable than his own, indeed Cernuda's Christ child is burdened more than he can stand by people's expectations of him which he cannot fulfil. The Magi then make one final, desperate attempt to realise their dream by presenting their gifts, 'tal si la ofrenda rica/Pudiera hacer al dios'[144]. In the same way that villagers would orchestrate their own

---

[142]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 305.

[143]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 305.

[144]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 305.

'Verwirrung' by fabricating faith that Momus was Klamm[145], the Magi try to engender faith from what they now recognise was a vain hope.

Attention has been drawn previously to the hedonism of Gaspar, and this is an integral part of the process of searching in 'La adoración de los Magos'[146]. The temptation to yield to the demands of ordinary life still makes itself felt, as is evident in the second section of the poem:

> 'Amo el jardín, cuando abren las flores serenas del otoño,
> El rumor de los árboles, cuya cima dora la luz toda reposo,'[147]

In the midst of the struggle for faith and transcendence, there is a pull, equally strong, to be side-tracked by physical, sensuous pleasures. This tendency is strongly reminiscent of K.'s relationship with Frieda, in which his quest lost direction through lust (although K. thought Frieda could be useful). When in the same stanza of the poem Gaspar says, 'Vivo estoy'[148], there seems to be a sense in which this deviation from the chosen path is at least equally valid and possibly more so, since Gaspar seems to be at greater peace than any of them after the 'desengaño' scene. This attitude is however relativised when, in the fourth section, it is left to a shepherd to remember the fate of the three kings:

> 'Uno muerto al regreso, de su tierra distante;
> Otro, perdido el trono, esclavo fue, o mendigo;
> Otro a solas viviendo, presa de la tristeza.'[149]

I see no reason to quibble with Harris' interpretation that the fates that the three suffer correspond, respectively, to those of Melchor, Baltasar and Gaspar[150]. If we assume that Gaspar, having abandoned whatever faith he might have had, returns to the pursuit of pleasure, then his fate is solitude. Thus, while being distracted from the search may

---

[145]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 174.

[146]See above, p. 119, where Gaspar's desires are explicitly sexual.

[147]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 301.

[148]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 302.

[149]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 307.

[150]See Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 83.

appear attractive and potentially more fulfilling than the search itself, its ultimate result is no less distressing, no less a cause for despair. If we compare this aspect with *Das Schloß*, we find that here too a similar notion comes to the fore: K. had the feeling of 'sich verirren'[151] even in the first stages of his relationship with Frieda, and that deviation from his quest in this manner would only lead to greater desolation.

The side-tracking within the process of searching is also visible in Cernuda's arrangement of the poems, for, while the majority in this section of *Las Nubes* deal with Cernuda's quest for the Absolute, certain poems are interpolated which reiterate a desire to concentrate on other things. Particularly significant is the poem 'Jardín antiguo', which is an expression of nostalgia for the hidden garden of *Primeras Poesías* where everything seemed in harmony[152]:

'Sentir otra vez, como entonces,
La espina aguda del deseo,
Mientras la juventud pasada
Vuelve. Sueño de un dios sin tiempo.'[153]

Cernuda remembers with longing and affection the 'paradise substitute' he created for himself as a younger man in Spain before his exile. It would give him the greatest of pleasure to abandon his search for existential security in the chaos of his present existence in favour of a sense of security which would be a kind of eternity in the temporal world. This theme is clearly a feature which is not present in *Das Schloß*: K.'s goal is always the castle, not the village. 'Sich verirren' could, however, describe Cernuda's situation here: the poem is a dream, not reality, and, however positive the poet

---

[151]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 43.

[152]Poem XXIII, *Primeras Poesías* (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 122):

'Escondido en los muros
Este jardín me brinda
Sus ramas y sus aguas
De secreta delicia.'

The hidden garden is a refuge, a haven of peace and tranquillity, where the dreaming persona may revel in indolent rest. (See also Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, pp. 31-2, and below, p. 150.)

[153]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 297.

may be towards dreams, the speculative 'sentir' as opposed to an affirmative 'siento' makes this clear[154]. It is gone, and after the two-stanza poem 'Deseo', the search is reinstated with 'La adoración de los Magos'.

In *Das Schloß* there are two potential 'wahre Wege': the one described by Bürgel, and K.'s greater degree of humility in the last chapter. It is however at this point that Kafka and Cernuda diverge most. Cernuda's Magi are defeated irrevocably, and the loss of faith is by now inevitable. The search for absolute order becomes merged back into a more general search for order, predominantly within the temporal sphere, seeking largely material rather than metaphysical, supra-human order (although traces do persist), which may at least enrich the moment. This is of course immediately reminiscent of the side-tracking into sensuality which we have just investigated, but it is not so simple. Rather than mere hedonism or a dream of a hidden refuge, the epitaph of 'La adoración de los Magos' opens thus:

> 'La delicia, el poder, el pensamiento
> Aquí descansan. Ya la fiebre es ida.'[155]

For the shepherd of the epitaph, this idyll in nature is a reality[156]. After the defeat of the quest, fulfilment in nature is, at least temporarily, presented as a genuine possibility rather than a vague Romantic dream, and the outcome seems to gravitate towards something more positive. It is this quality which makes it different from the distractions previously noted. Nevertheless, while it would appear to be a reality for the shepherd, it is not reality for Cernuda, and he still requires to look for it. There still remains the despair

---

[154]Such a desire for a 'paradise substitute' is a recurrent feature in Cernuda's poetry, but it is interesting that, in his more mature poetry, this attitude is rather more ambivalent than in *Primeras Poesías*. Bruton for example points out that 'Elegía Anticipada' recalls a cemetery which 'contains all the elements of Sansueña, Cernuda's paradise on earth' ('The Cemetery Poems of Luis Cernuda', *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 13 (1988), 194, and Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 358-60), but there is the awareness in the sixth stanza of the poem of 'la conciencia/De que tu vida allí tuvo su cima' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 359). The preterite 'tuvo' indicates that this 'cima' is passed and gone. Bruton comments further that in all of Cernuda's cemetery poems there is a 'tension created between the cemetery as *temenos* encapsulating innermost values and the cemetery as unpalatable Death' ('The Cemetery Poems', 202).

[155]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 308.

[156]See also Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 84.

of the final loss of faith.

The Result of the Search

The loss of faith in the poetry of Cernuda is by now apparent. We should however focus briefly on a discussion of the way in which this failure is expressed. The disastrous climax of 'La adoración de los Magos' is at the end of the fourth section:

> 'Y al entrar en la choza descubrieron los reyes
> La miseria del hombre, de que antes no sabían.
> Luego, como quien huye, el regreso emprendieron.
> También los caminantes pasaron a otras tierras
> Con su niño en los brazos. Nada supe de ellos.
> Soles y lunas hubo. Joven fui. Viejo soy.
> ...
> Buscaban un dios nuevo, y dicen que le hallaron.
> Yo apenas vi a los hombres; jamás he visto dioses.'[157]

The Magi sought divine grace, the one mediator between God and man, the miracle of salvation, but all they found was 'la miseria del hombre'. The extent of the 'desengaño' is not however simply that they did not obtain that for which they hoped, but they are actually in a worse situation than before: previously they did not know of this misery. All that had once been the driving force of existence, the single hope that had made them strive forward on their long journey, has been identified as worthless, which renders their lives far more meaningless than ever before. This is illustrated especially by the fact that they leave 'como quien huye': they cannot bear to remain any longer in the sight of the source of all despair. The unexceptional nature of Cernuda's Christ is emphasised by the way in which the family leave and go on their way, to return to a normal existence, far removed from any thought of the salvation of humanity. The opening line of the final stanza quoted is however curious, for it says, 'dicen que le hallaron'. Why should this be, given the acute sense of failure? There is a similar sentiment in the epitaph, viz., 'Buscaron la verdad, pero al hallarla/No creyeron en ella'[158]. There is thus a tension between finding there is nothing in which to believe, and finding genuine faith but

---

[157]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 307-8.

[158]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 308.

consciously rejecting it. The shepherd who narrates this confirms that he too has never seen gods of any description. The most likely interpretation is this: they *did* find truth, but what was true was that man was only faced with misery and no prospect of salvation. Their claim to have seen 'un dios nuevo' must therefore have been little more than the last feeble protestation that their life and quest had not been in vain.

There is no series of failures in Cernuda's poetry, as there is in *Das Schloß*. In our discussion of that novel, we also observed that there was one character — Amalia — who may have found the castle, who 'sah in den Grund'[159]. This truth condemns her to a life in an existential void. It is easy to see that the 'verdad' the Magi in Cernuda's poem find is distressingly similar: man is deemed to be irrevocably alone in the cosmos. We are reminded of just how acute this abandonment of man to his own destiny is in the much later poem 'Nochebuena cincuenta y una' from *Con las horas contadas*, which is a bitter reflection on what is now an unalterable loss of faith:

'Ha nacido. El frío,
La sombra, la muerte,
Todo el desamparo
Humano es su suerte.'[160]

This stanza has a clever construction. The first bald sentence 'Ha nacido' ostensibly means 'He (i.e., Christ) is born'. While grammatically 'El frío', 'La sombra', 'la muerte' and 'Todo el desamparo/Humano' are all in apposition to each other as the subject of 'es', the juxtaposition of 'Ha nacido' with 'El frío', together with a verb postponed for three lines, can equally suggest the meaning 'El frío ha nacido', especially if the poem is read aloud. The anniversary of the birth of Christ is, for Cernuda, no more than a painful reminder of man's isolation, and his Christ is 'tan débil/Contra nuestro engaño'[161], a helpless child.

---

[159]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 200.

[160]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 467.

[161]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 467.

It is with this perspective in mind that we may grasp the full meaning of the poem 'Las ruinas' of *Como quien espera el alba*, which deals with the loss of faith. (The 'tú' here is God Himself):

'Mas tú no existes. Eres tan sólo el nombre
Que da el hombre a su miedo y su impotencia,
Y la vida sin ti es esto que parecen
Estas mismas ruinas bellas en su abandono:
Delirio de la luz ya sereno a la noche,
Delirio acaso hermoso cuando es corto y es leve.'[162]

Man for Cernuda is alone in the universe, not because God has rejected man but because He is only a projection of man's 'miedo y impotencia', in other words, Cernuda can see no God in whom he can place his faith. Having renounced his faith, Cernuda now begins to indicate more explicitly the direction his life and poetry should now take. We observed in our examination of 'La adoración de los Magos' the way in which there is a positive note in the old shepherd's evaluation of the world, who lives a peaceful, idyllic existence in harmony with the natural world[163]. This now reappears when the persona of 'Las ruinas' contemplates the ruins. There is initially a reiteration of the feeling of disorientation with 'Delirio de la luz', but now it is 'ya sereno' and 'acaso hermoso'. There is a tentative suggestion that there is something in the natural world that is worth seeking for its own sake, something to give order in the world of chaos which is not absolute but may nevertheless be meaningful:

'Yo no te envidio, Dios; déjame a solas
Con mis obras humanas que no duran:
El afán de llenar lo que es efímero
De eternidad, vale tu omnipotencia.'[164]

This is an expression of the rejection of any concept of absolute order. While the search originally appeared to have the potential to find transcendental order (and that was

---

[162]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 325.

[163]See above, p. 133.

[164]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 325.

certainly the intention), the reality is failure. Cernuda now seeks a permanence within the temporal sphere as opposed to a permanent force which has authority and power over the temporal sphere. It is an expression of independence, of a desire to go forward on his own, and as such not altogether unreminiscent of K.'s early claim 'immer frei sein zu wollen'[165]. It sounds almost heroic, but is there a new order to come, or is chaos still looming on the horizon?

[165]See above, p. 94, and Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 11.

Synthesis

Having lost faith in an Absolute governing the universe, human beings have the option of either accepting that loss and constructing their lives on the basis that the world is absurd or of seeking to find once again the order which they have lost. As far as *Buddenbrooks*, *Das Schloß* and *La realidad y el deseo* are concerned, it is the second of these two choices which is explored: Thomas Buddenbrook and Cernuda's personae are despairing, aware of their own mortality and at the same time 'metaphysisch bedürftig'; it is less clear why K. of *Das Schloß* wishes to seek the castle, but his commitment to it is considerable, as is Cernuda's personae to their desire for Christian faith. There seems to be a gulf between the Absolute and man, the Absolute, if there be one, seems distant and indifferent to this world, a curious mixture of positive and negative qualities, often more a projection or reflection of the individual's own thoughts than an independent entity in its own right. The search itself seems difficult and labyrinthine, the individual depends more (or, in the case of Thomas Buddenbrook, needs to depend) on the mediating help of others. The result in all three cases is the returning of the individual to the human realm, completely defeated. In terms of the reasons for searching absolute order, there is greater similarity between *Buddenbrooks* and *La realidad y el deseo*; in terms of the goal and of the process of searching, there are more points of contact between *Das Schloß* and *La realidad y el deseo*. The comparative study illustrates the extent to which Cernuda's poetry unites themes and ideas evident in both Mann's and Kafka's writing and surely takes it away from the rather simplistic evaluation that it is 'Romantic' poetry[166]. Furthermore, the comparative study reinforces the importance of the existential/metaphysical sphere of concern within *Buddenbrooks*, and that Thomas Buddenbrook's crisis is far from an exclusive individual one. Perhaps most interesting of all however is the fact that the similarities between K.'s quest to enter the castle and an explicit search for God demonstrate that the existential and metaphysical import within *Das Schloß* is an issue which cannot be discredited or in some way 'marginalised' in the

---

[166]Cernuda himself may well have thought in 1928 that he was 'un romántico incurable', but it does considerable injustice to his poetry! ('Letter to Juan Guerrero', 28.XI.1928, James Valender, 'Cuarto Cartas de Luis Cernuda a Juan Guerrero (1928-1929)', *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, No. 316 (1976), 52.)

light either of socio-political ideas or deconstructive literary theories. It is still a major issue within the novel.

After the failure of the search for the absolute, the desire for order and meaning is however not something which is simply suppressed or becomes dormant. It is given a different direction, asserting itself in a search for a kind of transcendence, not by seeking *direct* contact with the Absolute but by more indirect means, so that, it is hoped, an appreciation of a greater sense of order may become possible. The reorientation is thus to an area of human existence which can be directly perceived. This aspect of the search for order in a world of chaos will be subdivided into two distinct areas: first the search for order in 'love', and second the search for order in art[167].

---

[167]It should be emphasised that distinctions between 'absolute' and 'non-absolute' order and further sub-divisions are determined more by the requirements of an ordered study of literature than by clearly defined 'categories' of themes inherent in the literary works themselves.

Chapter Three

Search for Order in the Material World I: 'Love'

The Sexual Awakening

'Love' and eroticism play a major rôle in the works of Mann, Kafka and Cernuda[1]. It is useful to begin a consideration of this subject with the theme of the sexual awakening, not because it is a major one, but because it establishes the fundamental importance of the physical side of the concept of 'love' for all three writers. It is 'love' which is rather closer to *eros* than to *agape*. Our discussion at this stage will be limited to Mann's *Buddenbrooks* and *Tonio Kröger*, and to Cernuda's *Primeras Poesías*, with brief reference also to Kafka's *Der Prozeß*.

In *Buddenbrooks*, erotic impulses are handled reticently and with little detail for much of the novel. With the last generation, however, the sickly and inadequate Hanno, the theme of the sexual awakening comes to the fore:

> 'Ja, das leidenschaftliche Tempo, mit dem Kai sich ihm genähert, hatte den kleinen Johann anfangs sogar erschreckt. Dieser kleine, verwahrloste Gesell hatte mit einem Feuer, einer stürmisch aggressiven Männlichkeit um die Gunst des stillen, elegant gekleideten Hanno geworben,'[2]

This a clear evocation of the first adolescent passion, although still too young to be overtly sexual. In addition, the phrase 'um die Gunst ... werben' suggests almost a 'Courtly Love' ethic, but it is comic when applied to two boys. The comic atmosphere is reinforced by the figure of the 'tearaway' Kai, but nevertheless a sense of physical desire is still conveyed.

A similar pattern of passionate involvement for the adolescent recurs in *Tonio*

---

[1]The general term 'love' has been chosen for reasons of convenience rather than for its semantic accuracy. While it summarises the concepts involved, it should be stressed that it does not provide a complete definition of them. The area of concern is certainly with 'love' in an imprecise sense, but in more specific terms it covers a wide range of emotions which form part of the human experience whereby one person feels attraction for another. Thus while 'love' in its most common sense of mutual attraction and emotional involvement between two people is certainly one aspect of this discussion, it also involves the related emotions of desire, passion, erotic impulses and instincts, physical infatuation and so on.

[2]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, pp. 527-8.

Kröger, where Tonio is for a short time enamoured of his school-friend Hans Hansen. In this work the notable difference from *Buddenbrooks* is that the attraction is more or less one-sided on the part of the protagonist. This one-sided aspect of the relationship is significant and is one which will be seen as recurring in the years of sexual maturity:

> 'So war Hans Hansen, und seit Tonio Kröger ihn kannte, empfand er Sehnsucht, sobald er ihn erblickte, eine neidische Sehnsucht, die oberhalb der Brust saß und brannte.'[3]

The early 'love' is passionate, indeed for Tonio it is an infatuation[4]. The passion itself is in fact more important than the beloved: Tonio for example admits he has no real wish to become like Hans[5], and the object of his 'Sehnsucht' is more the archetypal 'Bürger' of which Hans is a representative rather than the boy himself, which fact is evidenced also by the way in which Ingeborg Holm becomes a substitute for Hans in later years.

Having recognised the importance of the erotic impulse in Mann's young protagonists, a similar pattern is apparent in Cernuda's *Primeras Poesías*[6]. In these poems there is one significant difference in that, in at least some of the poems, the persona inhabits a world of innocence prior to the experience of 'love'. The erotic content is however a major element, as may be seen in poem VII:

> 'Quiero como horizonte
> Para mi muda gloria
> Tus brazos, que ciñendo

---

[3]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 278.

[4]Ignace Feuerlicht suggests that this relationship has autobiographical roots in Mann's own youth ('Thomas Mann and Homoeroticism', *Germanic Review*, 57 (1982), 93). A very similar situation is present in Mann's later novel *Der Zauberberg*, when protagonist Hans Castorp is infatuated with his school acquaintance Prisbislav Hippe (Mann, *Der Zauberberg*, pp. 162-76).

[5]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 278.

[6]While *Primeras Poesías* does not make reference to the specific age of the persona, it can be deduced as referring to adolescence by the subsequent fall from innocence in later poetry. See also Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, pp. 20-33, for a detailed study of the poetry of adolescence. Hughes meanwhile rightly stresses that *Primeras Poesías* is poetry 'with an adolescent protagonist' as opposed to 'mere adolescent outpourings' ('Cernuda and the Poetic Imagination: *Primeras Poesías* as Metaphysical Poetry', *Anales de Literatura Española*, 1 (1982), 322).

Mi vida la deshojan.

Vivo un solo deseo,
Un afán claro, unánime;
Afán de amor y olvido.
Yo no sé si alguien cae.'[7]

The sexual overtones characterise the persona as gripped by a powerful desire for the loved one, a desire indeed stronger than that of Mann's characters[8]. An additional feature is the one-sided nature of the desire: the only explicit reference to the beloved (or imagined beloved) is 'Tus brazos'[9]. The preoccupation may be at least as much with a largely impersonal infatuation as with a specific human being. (This makes the impulse appear an intensified version of that of the young Tonio Kröger.) The *sensuous* side of 'love' as the important one at this stage is emphasised by the line 'Quiero como *horizonte*'. The word 'horizonte' suggests that it is with the beloved's arms that 'love' begins and ends, that there is nothing of significance beyond.

Eros is such a part of Kafka's *Der Prozeß* that there is no more than crass physicality. In chapter seven, Josef K. encounters the 'court artist' Titorelli, and, hoping that Titorelli will help him in his dealings with the court, accompanies him to his attic studio. Titorelli is continually pestered by a group of young girls. While it is true that this is a 'normal', i.e., a heterosexual inclination rather than the homoeroticism in Mann and Cernuda, nevertheless a specifically gender-based approach is not of prime importance[10]. The following is typical of the girls' behaviour:

---

[7]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 111-2.

[8]Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 26, is correct up to a point when he says, 'Here is the emphatic proclamation of love's dream as the sole aim and purpose of his existence', certainly in the context of poem VII. The generalisation which this statement implies may however be a slight exaggeration.

[9]The reference to 'olvido' is also significant, which, throughout Cernuda's poetry, is a positive state of peace and tranquillity, frequently suggesting, as Richard K. Newman comments, a means of 'evasión de la soledad' ('«Primeras Poesías». 1924-27', *La Caña Gris*, Nos. 6-8 (Otoño de 1962), 94).

[10]Rupert C. Allen ('Luis Cernuda: Poet of Gay Protest', *Hispanófila*, 28 (1985), 61-78) insists on the importance of Cernuda's homosexuality, but, while it should not be forgotten, I find it unnecessarily restrictive to concentrate solely on that side of his poetry. The comparative study indeed is showing how much his poetry is concerned with considerably more than his homosexuality.

> '[Die Mädchen] drückten sich an die Mauer, damit K. bequem zwischen ihnen durchkomme, und glätteten mit der Hand ihre Schürzen. Alle Gesichter ... stellten eine Mischung von Kindlichkeit und Verworfenheit dar.'[11]

The shameless sexuality of these girls is fairly typical of the female figures in Kafka's writing. It is the eroticism noted in Mann and Cernuda in its most extreme form, an entirely sordid prostitution. While the use of the word 'Kindlichkeit' reminds us that they are children and thus must understand little of their awakening erotic impulses (which in turn is reminiscent of the state of innocence which Cernuda evokes), this is only a vestige of 'Kindlichkeit': their childhood and childishness have been all but annihilated by a consuming desire to seduce both Titorelli, whom they plague ceaselessly, and those such as K., who come to seek his advice.

But what of the order/chaos dichotomy? The untrammelled sexuality of Kafka's 'Gerichtsmädchen', the only reference to childhood sexuality in either of the two 'K.-novels', with its emptiness and total purposelessness, points directly to lack of order. Mann and Cernuda are, however, less extreme than Kafka. The seeds of decline into chaos are nonetheless definitely sown. In general terms, simply by being the latecomer in the process of 'Verfall', of decline from order into chaos, Hanno Buddenbrook is inevitably linked to this process. By virtue of that fact, all the aspects of his life, from his ill-health to his intellectual inadequacy, his directionless fantasising at the piano and his sexuality, cannot help but become symptomatic of the nadir of the decline of the Buddenbrook family. There is however a more 'realistic' level to the tendency towards chaos, seen first of all in the Hanno-Kai friendship:

> 'Diese Freundschaft war seit langem in der ganzen Schule bekannt. ... die Kameraden, außerstande, ihr Wesen zu enträtseln, hatten sich gewöhnt, sie mit einem gewissen scheuen Widerwillen gelten zu lassen und diese beiden Genossen als outlaws und fremdartige Sonderlinge zu betrachten,'[12]

The expression of awakening sexuality in a close friendship between Hanno and Kai has

---

[11]Kafka, *Der Prozeß*, p. 122.

[12]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 734.

resulted in a decrease in their ability to communicate with others and effectively alienated them from their society. While it would be exaggerated to claim that at this stage it has disastrous consequences in the form of a sense of existential isolation, nevertheless it should be recognised that such a process is clearly beginning. In addition, the awareness of sexuality is a source of difficulty for both boys personally:

> '»Ja, ich werde wohl spielen«, sagte er, »obgleich ich es nicht tun sollte ... ich kann es nicht lassen, obgleich es alles noch schlimmer macht.«
>
> »Schlimmer?«
>
> Hanno schwieg.
>
> »Ich weiß, wovon du spielst«, sagte Kai. Und dann schwiegen beide.
>
> Sie waren in einem seltsamen Alter. Kai war sehr rot geworden und blickte zu Boden, ohne den Kopf zu senken. Hanno sah blaß aus.'[13]

'Spielen' ostensibly refers to Hanno's playing the piano, but it also has for Hanno a masturbatory significance. It is a way of releasing feelings which he as yet does not properly understand[14]. The fact that the activity only serves to 'make everything worse', coupled with the obvious discomfort Hanno feels at the disclosure, indicates that this has caused him considerable personal distress. Again it is exaggerated to suggest that there is a sense of 'chaos', but we feel that Hanno is already on a downward slope.

Certain similar themes are apparent also in *Tonio Kröger*. Tonio's 'love' for Hans Hansen makes him acutely aware of his separateness and the fact that his artistic tendencies draw him away from normal, everyday existence. This estrangement becomes stronger when he then becomes infatuated with Ingeborg Holm, and at his dancing lesson when she too is present, he dances at the wrong time and leaves the room:

> 'Aber obgleich er einsam, ausgeschlossen und ohne Hoffnung vor einer geschlossenen Jalousie stand und in seinem Kummer tat, als könne er hindurchblicken, so war er dennoch glücklich.'[15]

---

[13]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 759.

[14]See also Hollingdale, pp. 67-71.

[15]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 289.

While it is true that Tonio does claim to be happy, it is not a love without cost, and certainly not unadulterated happiness. The awareness of his passion is a reminder that he is alive, but it also causes isolation and alienation. His loneliness and isolation are symbolised by the physical barrier of the blind, which stands between him and a true relationship. The existence of 'love' is at once then the possibility of meaning and order *and* the force which is bringing him closer to chaos.

Returning to Cernuda's early poetry, we see a certain similarity emerging. We noted in poem VII of *Primeras Poesías* the importance of erotic desire, but it does violence to the poem to extract only that theme from it. The poem opens as follows:

'Existo, bien lo sé,
Porque le transparenta
El mundo a mis sentidos
Su amorosa presencia.

Mas no quiero estos muros,
Aire infiel a sí mismo,
Ni esas ramas'[16]

The amorous experience here is even further removed from genuine involvement than is Tonio Kröger's. While the opening stanza could suggest a degree of happiness and fulfilment, it is nevertheless little more than the awareness of the *existence* of passion which is the confirmation that he is alive, for the persona himself is clearly alone[17]: there exists the physical barrier of the walls between the persona and the 'brazos' of the beloved[18], just as the blind separates Tonio from Inge[19]. Harris interprets this poem as

---

[16]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 111.

[17]While Manuel Ulacia does acknowledge the isolation in this poem (*Luis Cernuda: Escritura, cuerpo y deseo* (Barcelona: Laia, 1986), p. 120), he nevertheless in my opinion overstates the degree of happiness in the first stanza when he claims that the poet is 'en extática comunión con el mundo' and there is 'un momento de plenitud' (p. 117).

[18]As Soufas comments, Cernuda 'defines himself as an incompleteness or absence' ('Ideologizing Form: Anti-Mimetic Language Theories in the Early Poetry of Jorge Guillén and Luis Cernuda', *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 16 (1991), 111).

[19]Francisco Romero ignores this aspect of the wall imagery in *Primeras Poesías*, arguing that the wall represents the protection which the persona's room offers, although he concedes that the wall does later

Cernuda's claim that love is his sole aim[20]. Harris says also that it is an identification 'with the dimension of *deseo* before he has had any experience of *realidad*'[21]. This does not emphasise sufficiently the additional fact that, 'before he has had any experience of *realidad*', he has had more than a glimpse of chaos.

Is there any sign of order in these adolescent experiences? As far as Kafka is concerned, there is only empty lust, but Mann and Cernuda do introduce a desire for order. This desire is escapist, leading the adolescent to seek solace in something else. Rather than concentrating exclusively on the amatory experience, there is a parallel attraction, which, in the case of *Buddenbrooks* and *Tonio Kröger*, is for art, and in the case of *Primeras Poesías*, is poetry and the world of nature. In *Buddenbrooks*, Hanno fantasises at the piano:

> 'Und [das Ziel] kam, es war nicht mehr hintanzuhalten, die Krämpfe der Sehnsucht hätten nicht mehr verlängert werden können, ... die Erfüllung, die vollkommene Befriedigung brach herein, und mit entzücktem Aufjauchzen entwirrte sich alles zu einem Wohlklang,'[22]

This is a means of sexual release for Hanno, and it is the confirmation of the music's masturbatory significance. What is also important here is that there is a search for meaning in an erotic-artistic experience, an attempt to find a point of orientation in the music which he loves in order to compensate for the additional problems he has encountered with the onset of puberty. As Heller states, Hanno's art is one 'which, conscious of originating in destruction, anxiously cherishes the hope of a new freedom'[23]. This idea especially gives Hanno's interest in music the aura of a Romantic flight from

---

come to represent a 'cárcel' ('El muro y la ventana: La "otredad" de Luis Cernuda', *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, No. 396 (1983), 551 & 559). Similarly, for Begoña Ibáñez Avendaño, the 'refugio' is the principal significance of the wall imagery. ('El aire, el agua, el muro y el acorde como génesis literaria de *La realidad y el deseo*', *Letras de Deusto*, 55 (1992), 99. C.f. poem XXIII, Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 122-3, and below, p. 150.) The negative side should not however be ignored.

[20]See above, p. 144.

[21]Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 26.

[22]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 765.

[23]Heller, *Thomas Mann: The Ironic German*, p. 35.

reality, with a view to seeking some kind of quasi-mystical experience[24]. As a *flight*, however, it is a quest for some kind of order, but *not* one which confronts the sexuality and endeavours to find meaning in an interpersonal relationship. The sexual impulse is instead sublimated into musical activity. The irony is that, while in this particular instance 'alles entwirrte sich zu einem Wohlklang', the concord and harmony are only transient, and we are reminded of Hanno's earlier comment that it only 'makes everything worse'[25]: is this evasive quest for order in itself closer to chaos?

As a boy, Tonio Kröger also seeks solace in art, but there is a difference between Tonio and Hanno. While Hanno is captivated by the voluptuous eroticism of Wagnerian music, Tonio is interested in the much less irrational literature of Schiller and Storm. Like Hanno, Tonio is also concerned with artistic production, but his artistic medium is poetry. It is not so much a Romantic flight as a conscious decision not to indulge his sensual drives any further than the chaste friendship with Hans Hansen:

> 'Der Springbrunnen, der alte Walnußbaum, seine Geige und in der Ferne das Meer, ... diese Dinge waren es, die er liebte, ... Dinge, deren Namen mit guter Wirkung in Versen zu verwenden sind und auch wirklich in den Versen, die Tonio Kröger zuweilen verfertigte, immer wieder erklangen.'[26]

Tonio concentrates on the formal aspect of literature and seeks to order his personal experiences into poetry. The necessary formal organisation of poetry, together with the positive nature of the ending of the 'Novelle', does tend to suggest that Tonio's youthful attempt at sexual sublimation is more successful than Hanno Buddenbrook's, but, as we shall see later in the 'Novelle' *Der Tod in Venedig*, denial need not necessarily be a cure. It is thus less than a definitive answer[27].

---

[24]The Romantic nature of this 'flight' is demonstrated by Felix Höpfner, who compares Hanno with Goethe's Werther, one of German Romanticism's most famous protagonists ('Goethes *Werther* — auch ein Modell der *Buddenbrooks*? Sowie einige Bemerkungen über Originalität und Thomas Manns Verhältnis zu den Quellen', *Orbis Litterarum*, 51 (1996), 35).

[25]See above, p. 146.

[26]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 276.

[27]See also Frank Donald Hirschbach, *The Arrow and the Lyre: A Study of the Rôle of Love in the Works of Thomas Mann* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955), p. 21, and Ann E. Hirst, 'Literary Decadence in the

How does Cernuda express his need for order in *Primeras Poesías*? In general terms he is given to dreams and rêveries, but more specifically he uses the world of nature as the source of refuge for his adolescent persona. This takes the form of an evasive flight from reality into an ordered, tranquil world of an enclosed hidden garden, as can be seen in poem XXIII:

'Escondido en los muros
Este jardín me brinda
Sus ramas y sus aguas
De secreta delicia.

Tierra indolente. En vano
Resplandece el destino.
Junto a las aguas quietas
Sueño y pienso que vivo.

Mas el tiempo ya tasa
El poder de esta hora;'[28]

Cernuda's garden is the focus of an evasive strategy, a place of order and harmony to which he can flee (literally or in his mind, the poem does not stipulate) and hide from the sense of desolation[29]. As Hanno Buddenbrook channelled his emotions into art, with its

---

Early Works of André Gide and Thomas Mann, with a Consideration of their Later Relationship', Thesis Oxford 1982, p. 203.

[28]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 122-3.

[29]While in this and other instances the persona is able to take part in the ordered world of the garden ('Sueño y pienso que vivo'), there are other poems in which the persona is separated also from the natural world, for example, poem XII:

'La llama tuerce su hastío,
Sola su viva presencia,
Y la lámpara ya duerme
Sobre mis ojos en vela.

Cuán lejano todo. Muertas
Las rosas que ayer abrieran,'

(Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 115.)

attendant hope of a 'new freedom', so too here there is a sense of Romantic fulfilment. Moreover, the transient nature of the experience is painfully apparent here as it was for Hanno, as is seen in the last two lines quoted above: the ordered world is limited by time. The choice of the word 'hora', relating to the time spent in the garden, emphasises its shortness, especially in comparison with the much more vague concept of 'tiempo', which is the time which impinges upon the persona and pulls him back to reality.

The writing of poetry is also of significance in *Primeras Poesías*, and is an expression of a need for order in response to the awakening chaos. From a biographical point of view, this is illustrated by the existence of the collection itself, but the *process* of writing is also mentioned explicitly in poem VIII. It is not insignificant that Cernuda chooses the sonnet form for this poem, where strict form and order play such a major rôle, even including the use of rhyme, which is a very rare feature in Cernuda's work. The opening quatrain establishes an atmosphere of considerable gloom, with nature close to chaos. The poem then continues as follows:

'Y la fuga hacia dentro. Ciñe el frío,
Lento reptil, sus furias congeladas;
La soledad, tras las puertas cerradas,
Abre la luz sobre el papel vacío.

Las palabras que velan el secreto
Placer, y el labio virgen no lo sabe;
El sueño, embelesado e indolente,

Entre sus propias nieblas va sujeto,
Negándose a morir. Y sólo cabe
La belleza fugaz bajo la frente.'[30]

The second quatrain of the sonnet makes explicit the retreat from reality to the inner world, but rather than the peace of the hidden garden, the poet here concentrates on the act of poetic creation as a potential means to alleviate his sadness. With words of coldness and loneliness abounding, the attempt to give poetic form to experiences is

[30]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 112.

failing also, and the desire to channel the as yet undirected eroticism is thwarted by artistic sterility ('el papel vacío'). The disaster is short-lived, however: just as Tonio Kröger succeeds in transforming 'Springbrunnen, Walnußbaum, Geige und Meer' into poetry, so too the persona here perseveres with the creative act, until eventually the 'papel vacío' is replaced by 'la belleza fugaz' of the finished poem. In this way, the various protagonists and personae in Mann, Kafka and Cernuda are awakened to sexuality, and, while there are signs of chaos, there is a limited positive side in the ability to sublimate chaos into art.

Thomas Mann

The Experience of 'Love'

Having considered the nature of the sexual awakening in Mann, Kafka and Cernuda together, it is now appropriate to consider mature 'love' experiences, starting with Mann's writing. This issue is a complex one, for physical encounters intermingle with dreams, and also with more spiritual dimensions as 'love' itself becomes a means by which to seek order. It seems relevant to discuss first actual encounters in order to ascertain what 'love' is actually like, before turning later to the more inward-looking attitudes and perceptions.

As far as Mann's work is concerned, the two texts which are relevant for the sexual awakening are of less relevance here: the adult 'love' relationships in *Buddenbrooks* are limited in number and treated very reticently. Similarly, Tonio Kröger, after years of monk-like celibacy, only affirms to his friend Lisaweta at the end of the 'Novelle' his 'love from afar' for the 'Bürger' of his roots, which, despite his reference to I Corinthians 13[31], is not so much sacrificial Christian love as a kind of pious enthusiasm. The texts which are relevant now are the early short story *Der kleine Herr Friedemann* and the slightly later *Der Tod in Venedig.*

What is the nature of the 'love' involved? Again it is allied rather more to pagan *eros* than to Christian *agape.* The early story *Der kleine Herr Friedemann,* which is admittedly a somewhat banal story of obsessive unrequited love ending in a predictable suicide, introduces some of the important themes. Johannes Friedemann as an adolescent falls in love with a girl. He then sees her with another boy and consequently renounces love for ever. He subsequently sublimates all his erotic tendencies to a passion for the theatre, but as an adult falls in love again, this time with a married woman, Gerda von Rinnlingen. The two meet briefly in the theatre one evening, and after this Friedemann is totally captivated:

---

[31]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, pp. 340-1.

> '... dann dachte er an jenen Augenblick, wo ihr Kopf den seinen berührt, wo er den Duft ihres Körpers eingeatmet hatte, und er blieb zum zweiten Male stehen, ... und murmelte dann abermals völlig ratlos, verzweifelt, außer sich:
>
> »Mein Gott! Mein Gott!«'[32]

This is a form of passion or infatuation which is a development and intensification of the desires characteristic of adolescent eroticism. It is a profound emotional and sensual experience: Friedemann is entranced in erotic voluptuousness by Gerda's perfume and obsessed by the brief physical contact with her. Furthermore, the essentially erotic nature of this love is suggested by the phrase 'völlig ratlos, verzweifelt, außer sich': this prevents any spiritual or intellectual response. After years of sublimation, his sensual drives appear to require a conscious act of repression and control, and, blinded to all rationality, he can only utter the words '»Mein Gott!«'.

This consuming, captivating nature of passion is not confined to *Der kleine Herr Friedemann*. It reappears in the much more complex and sophisticated 'Novelle' *Der Tod in Venedig*, where ageing artist Gustav von Aschenbach, over-tired from working, takes a trip to Venice and becomes infatuated with a young Polish boy Tadzio[33]. Like Johannes Friedemann, Aschenbach's earlier life (after his brief marriage) has been characterised by sexual repression[34], and the exercising of an iron will over himself. When he is confronted with Tadzio's beauty, he is unable to withstand it[35]. The encounter begins with Aschenbach's voyeuristic enjoyment of the young Polish boy, especially when he

---

[32]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 83.

[33]Claus Sommerhage argues that, since 'feurigere[] Impulse[]' (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 565) come from Aschenbach's mother, Aschenbach's artistic nature too is in effect a 'Mutteridentifikation', and therefore, in Freudian vein, his desire is specifically homosexual because of this same 'Mutteridentifikation' (*Eros und Poesis: Über das Erotische im Werk Thomas Manns* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1982), pp. 95-6). The homosexual element is also due in part to the autobiographical influences in the background to this story: see for example Gerhard Härle, *Männerweiblichkeit: Zur Homosexualität bei Klaus und Thomas Mann*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Anton Hain, 1993), pp. 166-7.

[34]'... begann er seinen Tag beizeiten mit Stürzen kalten Wassers über Brust und Rücken...' (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 567). See also Eric L. Marson, *The Ascetic Artist: Prefigurations in Thomas Mann's 'Der Tod in Venedig'* (Bern: Lang, 1979), p. 18.

[35]See also Susanne Kimball, 'Thomas Mann's Protagonists and the Problem of Eros', *Germanic Notes*, 19 (1989), 51.

watches him with his friends on the beach:

> 'Sie gingen, als für diesmal die Arbeit am Sandbau beendigt war, umschlungen den Strand entlang, und der, welcher »Jaschu« gerufen wurde, küßte den Schönen.'[36]

Aschenbach is gripped by a sensuous excitement, although he remains largely unaware of it, preferring to consider it the legitimate pursuit of artistic appreciation[37]. His enthusiasm, and especially his interest in Jascha's kissing of Tadzio, suggests that these events form a vicarious experience, an indulgence at second hand of what has always been forbidden. This voyeurism does however develop, and the enjoyment at second hand becomes a passion at first hand. In chapter three, Aschenbach returns to his hotel after attempting to leave Venice and then changing his mind:

> 'Aschenbach blickte hinaus, ... zufrieden, wieder hier zu sein, kopfschüttelnd unzufrieden über seinen Wankelmut, seine Unkenntnis der eigenen Wünsche. So saß er wohl eine Stunde, ruhend und gedankenlos träumend. ... Sieh, Tadzio, da bist ja auch du wieder! Aber im gleichen Augenblick ... erkannte [er], daß ihm um Tadzio's willen der Abschied so schwer geworden war.'[38]

Aschenbach feels the full range of emotions associated with love — joy, pain, excitement — and he admits to himself his interest in the boy, who up until then had been only an object of his observation. The extent of his intoxication is seen particularly in the way that he sits for an hour 'gedankenlos träumend': both of these states of mind are anathema to the one whose motto is 'Durchhalten'[39], since dreaming is surrendering to the subconscious, relaxing control on sensual instincts. Moreover, the fact that the dreaming

---

[36]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 593.

[37]For example:

> 'Gut, gut! dachte Aschenbach mit jener fachmännisch kühlen Billigung, in welche Künstler zuweilen einem Meisterwerk gegenüber ihr Entzücken, ihre Hingerissenheit kleiden.'

(Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 589.)

[38]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 601.

[39]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 566. See also Hans Wysling, 'Schopenhauer-Leser Thomas Mann', *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch*, 64 (1983), 68, who compares this 'Moralist der Leistung' with the Schopenhauerian 'Heros-Motiv'.

is 'gedankenlos' is especially significant: he is the one whose very life has been devoted to writing characterised by 'ein ... gewolltes Gepräge der Meisterlichkeit und Klassizität'[40], that is, writing with strict and yet lucid, rational form: it is precisely that kind of cerebral writer who is no longer so interested in thought. It is also interesting that his dissatisfaction is not with the *nature* of his wishes, but with his *lack of knowledge* of them: already he is infatuated enough not to be concerned about the fact that his infatuation is opposed to his chosen way of life.

The fundamentally sensuous nature of these experiences of 'love' is crucial for the protagonist's downfall in both *Der kleine Herr Friedemann* and *Der Tod in Venedig.* In both stories, the central characters are involved in an overpowering erotic experience and die at the end of the story, but the reasons for their deaths are more complex, being rooted in their psychologies. In *Der kleine Herr Friedemann,* the erotic experience becomes an active force and Friedemann its passive victim:

> 'Es richtete ihn zugrunde, das fühlte er. Aber wozu noch kämpfen und sich quälen? ... Mochte er seinen Weg weitergehen und die Augen schließen vor dem gähnenden Abgrund dort hinten, gehorsam dem Schicksal, gehorsam der überstarken, peinigend süßen Macht, der man nicht zu entgehen vermag.'[41]

'Love' for Friedemann has become synonymous with the forces of destruction. Its nature is chaos: it is malevolent and an enemy of life. The only possible outcome is annihilation, which Friedemann accepts as his destiny. What is curious however is that this chaotic power is not especially unwelcome: it is a 'süße Macht'. Rather than 'kämpfen und sich quälen', he is affected by a kind of 'Todeserotik', that is, by a voluptuous, sensual pleasure at the thought of the release from life and individuation to be united with the primeval force of the 'süßen Macht'. It is a kind of Romantic apotheosis, a reaching out towards order, but it is based on illusion: after he has stammered out his declaration of love for Gerda, she rejects him and walks away, with the following result:

---

[40]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen,* p. 570.

[41]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen,* p. 92.

> 'Haß ..., der jetzt ... in eine irrsinnige Wut ausartete, die er betätigen mußte, sei es auch gegen sich selbst ...
>
> Auf dem Bauche schob er sich noch weiter vorwärts, erhob den Oberkörper und ließ ihn ins Wasser fallen.'[42]

Rejected, Friedemann is denied his 'Liebestod' and forced to play out the standard Romantic cliché of committing suicide, now that he has no hope of fulfilment, either in life or in death. Chaos has prevailed, although it must be said that it does so here in a hackneyed way. It is nevertheless important in that it introduces another theme which is developed in *Der Tod in Venedig*[43].

For reasons which will become clear later, I wish to look at Aschenbach's romantic involvement, not beginning with his Platonic aspirations earlier in the 'Novelle', but with his decline into decadence and disaster, concentrating first on the *realistic* level and then later on the symbolic one[44]. Aschenbach's sensual experience is taking control of his existence, but this process not only intensifies, it develops and becomes more complex, most especially in the way that Tadzio becomes more aware of Aschenbach's attention:

> 'Irgendeine Beziehung und Bekanntschaft mußte sich notwendig ausbilden zwischen Aschenbach und dem jungen Tadzio, ... Was bewog zum Beispiel den Schönen, ... auf dem vorderen Wege, durch den Sand, an Aschenbachs Wohnplatz vorbei und manchmal unnötig dicht an ihm vorbei ..., zur Hütte der Seinen zu schlendern? ... Aschenbach erwartete täglich Tadzio's Auftreten ... Zuweilen ... blickte er auf, und ihre Blicke trafen sich ... In der gebildeten und würdevollen Miene des Älteren verriet nichts eine innere Bewegung; aber in Tadzio's Augen war ein Forschen, ein nachdenkliches Fragen, in seinen Gang kam ein Zögern, er blickte zu Boden,

---

[42]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, pp. 97-8.

[43]James Northcote-Bade suggests that the fact that the 'Liebestod' idea is one which does recur in Mann's writings is an attempt on the author's part to 'express[], and thus to a certain extent achiev[e] relief from, his sex-related guilt feelings' ('The Background to the "Liebestod" Plot Pattern in the Works of Thomas Mann', *Germanic Review*, 59 (1984), 17), although we should be careful not to identify Mann's protagonists too closely with Mann himself.

[44]Perhaps what makes *Der Tod in Venedig* so sophisticated is that the whole of Aschenbach's erotic 'adventure' can be seen and explained in both psychological-realistic terms and in symbolic-literary terms. See also Swales, *Thomas Mann: A Study*, especially pp. 38-41.

> er blickte lieblich wieder auf, und wenn er vorüber war, so schien ein Etwas in seiner Haltung auszudrücken, daß nur Erziehung ihn hinderte, sich umzuwenden.'[45]

Marson produces convincing evidence of coquettish behaviour on Tadzio's part, even as early as the boy's second appearance[46]. It is however at this later stage that Tadzio's involvement becomes particularly important, because whereas earlier Aschenbach merely interpreted Tadzio's gestures as 'kindliche Verschämtheit'[47], and thus all the more enchanting for him in his observations, now the boy's response is sufficient to signal mutual interest and thus to mark the very beginnings of a relationship between them. Such reciprocation, however slight, is for Aschenbach a positive development, since it allows him greater participation than the previous voyeurism, but there is a subtle irony in the passage quoted: nothing betrays Aschenbach's 'innere Bewegung' when they meet. Whereas once his life was devoted to self-control and asceticism both for the sake of his art and more or less as ends in themselves, now he makes use of his powers to hide his feelings in a kind of game he is playing with the object of his desire. Tadzio, meanwhile, responds with 'ein Forschen, ein nachdenkliches Fragen'. Marson takes this, together with his 'Zögern' while walking past, to be open provocation[48], but is this perhaps a little exaggerated? Marson is certainly correct not to allow himself to be deceived by the way that, at this stage, the story is told from Aschenbach's point of view rather than objectively, but nevertheless we do not have enough information to say categorically that Tadzio wishes a genuine relationship. It seems more likely that Tadzio's behaviour is illustrative of immature, adolescent sexuality which senses physical attraction but does not understand it, and the 'searching and questioning' are at least as much an expression of his confusion.

Perhaps the pivotal point of the story, and certainly of their relationship, comes shortly after this incident, when the two meet by chance one evening. Aschenbach is

---

[45]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, pp. 612-3.

[46]Marson, p. 46ff.

[47]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 589.

[48]Marson, p. 59.

taken off guard[49]:

> '... in dieser Sekunde geschah es, daß Tadzio lächelte: ihn anlächelte, sprechend, vertraut, liebreizend und unverhohlen, ... Es war das Lächeln des Narziß, der sich über das spiegelnde Wasser neigt, ... ein ganz wenig verzerrtes Lächeln, verzerrt von der Aussichtslosigkeit seines Trachtens, die holden Lippen seines Schattens zu küssen, kokett, neugierig und leise gequält, betört und betörend.'[50]

Controversy reigns regarding 'das Lächeln des Narziß'. Heller for example has taken this to be the narrator's judgement and thus that Tadzio is genuinely narcissistic[51], while Marson sees this as Aschenbach's *own* judgement which he makes out of fear of '*actually* entering upon some sort of real transaction with the boy'[52]. In that case, the comment is an expression of Aschenbach's self-deception. The problem arises because of narrative perspective. The shift from straight narrative ('Tadzio lächelte') to comment ('Es war das Lächeln des Narziß') involves no change whatsoever in the style: there is no linguistic signpost to point to whether the comment is part of the narrative or 'erlebte Rede'. It would thus appear that Mann preferred to leave this part of the text ambiguous. The two different viewpoints are an *integral part* of the text.

What are the implications of this ambiguity? If we take the view that Tadzio is genuinely narcissistic, then this is consonant with the text. He does appear to be pampered and spoilt[53], and it therefore seems perfectly consistent that he should be convinced of his own attractiveness. His 'Trachten' is therefore 'aussichtslos' because his 'love' is selfish and egocentric: he is not interested in a satisfying relationship, but only in himself. This 'vicious circle' of egocentrism is emphasised too by the adjectives 'betört

---

[49]'er hatte nicht Zeit gehabt, seine Miene zu Ruhe und Würde zu befestigen' (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 614).

[50]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 614.

[51]Erich Heller, *Thomas Mann: The Ironic German*, pp. 110-111.

[52]Marson, p. 60.

[53]On the beach, for example, he is very popular amongst the children playing:

> 'Aber sein Name war es, der am öftesten erklang. Offenbar war er begehrt, umworben, bewundert.'

(Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 593.)

und betörend': Tadzio is 'bewitched' by his own beauty and simultaneously bewitching *himself* (as well as Aschenbach) and thus closing the circle of his own self-love.

If we consider the opposing view, we focus on Aschenbach's lack of self-awareness. Marson argues that this is the climax of Tadzio's seductive assault on Aschenbach, but that the protagonist's own fear of involvement leads him to 'throw[] over the situation the veil of his classicizing and "pretty" mythology'[54]. This too is plausible, since, first, Aschenbach's sexual repression bespeaks an unwillingness to admit to inclinations within himself[55]. Second, his art has a very 'classical flavour' to it[56], and the symbolic stratum of the story is laden with reference to the art of Antiquity. This would make it likely that Aschenbach would use classical art to pretend that Tadzio's smile is not an expression of love or even interest in another person. In this case, Tadzio's 'Trachten' is 'aussichtslos' because Aschenbach 'has not given Tadzio any cause to be hopeful'[57].

I believe this ambiguity to be part of the text: in this situation neither party can be neatly categorised as 'lover' and 'beloved'. The relationship is much more complex. The effect on the protagonist is, however, the same: it forces from him his declaration of love:

> '»Du darfst so nicht lächeln! ...« Er warf sich auf eine Bank, ... Und zurückgelehnt, mit hängenden Armen, überwältigt und mehrfach von Schauern überlaufen, flüsterte er die stehende Formel der Sehnsucht, ... »Ich

---

[54]Marson, p. 59. Tom Hayes and Lee Quinby attribute this 'fear of involvement', in psychoanalytic terms, to a 'fear of emasculation' ('The Aporia of Bourgeois Art: Desire in Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*', *Criticism*, 31 (1989), 163).

[55]A few pages before this scene, we are told of 'Ehemalige Gefühle, ... die im strengen Dienst seines Lebens erstorben waren und nun so sonderbar gewandelt zurückkehrten,' (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 611). It is at least possible that these 'former feelings' are specifically homosexual inclinations of which Aschenbach was aware in his youth and which he has since consciously repressed. See Manfred Dierks, 'Der Wahn und die Träume in »Der Tod in Venedig«. Thomas Manns folgenreiche Freud-Lektüre im Jahr 1911', *Psyche*, 44 (1990), 260.

[56]Note the 'gewollte[] Gepräge der Meisterlichkeit und Klassizität', quoted above (p. 156). (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 570.)

[57]Marson, p. 60.

liebe dich!«'[58]

This is no conventional declaration of love. First, it is made when Aschenbach is alone, suggesting a degree of egocentrism. Even more interesting is his objection to Tadzio's smile. If Tadzio is narcissistic, then the smile is a torment for Aschenbach: Tadzio's 'love' is selfish and therefore their relationship, such as it is, is meaningless. If we accept Marson's argument, then his condemnation of the smile confirms that the artist is afraid of a relationship and confirms his own egocentrism[59]. Whichever the interpretation, there is no hope of meaningful interaction, but instead Aschenbach opts for an obsessive, voyeuristic infatuation[60].

There is a further dimension to this egocentrism on the part of Aschenbach, and that is the tendency towards indulging in erotic rêveries. A few pages before his declaration of love we read the following:

> 'Dann schien es ihm wohl, als sei er entrückt ins elysische Land, an die Grenzen der Erde, wo ... immer sanft kühlenden Anhauch Okeanos aufsteigen läßt und in seliger Muße die Tage verrinnen, mühelos, kampflos und ganz nur der Sonne und ihren Festen geweiht.'[61]

Engrossed in his 'affair', Aschenbach becomes more and more inward-looking. One symptom of this is such visions of the unreal[62]. Moreover, the sensual bliss envisaged in

---

[58]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 614.

[59]Egocentrism is something which Aschenbach has justified to himself not long before this incident, by means of classical mythology:

> '... daß der Liebende göttlicher sei als der Geliebte, weil in jenem der Gott sei, nicht aber im andern, —'

(Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 607.)

[60]Andrea Rudolph also discusses the lack of interaction between Aschenbach and Tadzio, pointing out that Aschenbach remains silent when confronted with the boy: this in itself is significant, since 'Die Sprache als das ihm eigene Medium der Befreiung und Objektivierung versagt ihm' (*Zum Modernitätsproblem in ausgewählten Erzählungen Thomas Manns* (Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, Akademischer Verlag Stuttgart, 1991), p. 140).

[61]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 603.

[62]The most dramatic erotic dream he has is at night shortly before his death, which is a total surrender to animalistic passion (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, pp. 631-3). Marc A. Weiner makes the further interesting point that Aschenbach's surrendering to his passion is reflected by a steady increase in his response to music

this rêverie suggests sterile hedonistic eroticism, and is further evidence of his turning away from the values of 'Durchhalten'. Such a stance is a directionless, aimless sensual enjoyment and indicative of the hopelessness of Aschenbach's erotic interest.

Aschenbach's final decline is now swift and inevitable. There is no possibility of a relationship which can have any meaning, and the protagonist's life is soon lost to chaos:

> 'Was galt ihm noch Kunst und Tugend gegenüber den Vorteilen des Chaos?'[63]

The chaos is the unbridled sensual excitement of Nietzsche's Dionysian instinct[64], suggesting lust and sexual gratification. Ironically, this hedonism is an obsession existing entirely in his mind. Not only has he lost control of his own desires, but these desires are themselves directed towards an empty illusion. The end of his life is tragically deluded: he deliberately stays in Venice, knowing that the city is caught in a cholera epidemic[65]. His death is then ensured when he contracts the disease from some over-ripe strawberries[66], and it is at least possible that this is a deliberate act, since he is fully aware of the danger of infection. He then dies in the presence of Tadzio:

> 'Ihm war aber, als ob der bleiche und liebliche Psychagog dort draußen ihm

---

and musical sounds (as in *Buddenbrooks*, here too music is something decadent), beginning with the 'Musik' (e.g., p. 605) of Tadzio's voice. This whole process is then mirrored in this one dream, where there is a progression from 'Geheul' (p. 632) at the start to the 'Flötenton' (p. 633) ('Silence, Sound, and Song in *Der Tod in Venedig*: A Study in Psycho-Social Repression', *Seminar*, 23 (1987), especially 148). For an analysis specifically of the importance of dreams in Aschenbach's decline, see Cynthia B. Bryson, 'The Imperative Daily Nap; or, Aschenbach's Dream in *Death in Venice*', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 29 (1992), 181-93. See also Gary D. Astrachan, 'Dionysos in Thomas Mann's Novella, "Death in Venice"', *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 35 (1990), 69.

[63]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 631.

[64]For example:

> '... bei dem gewaltigen, die ganze Natur lustvoll durchdringenden Nahen des Frühlings erwachen jene dionysischen Regungen, in deren Steigerung das Subjektive zu völliger Selbstvergessenheit hinschwindet.'

(*Die Geburt der Tragödie*, in Nietzsche, *Werke*, I, p. 24.)

[65]'Er schwieg und blieb' (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 631).

[66]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 637.

> lächle, ihm winke; als ob er, die Hand aus der Hüfte lösend, hinausdeute, voranschwebe ins Verheißungsvoll-Ungeheure. Und, wie so oft, machte er sich auf, ihm zu folgen.'[67]

In *Der kleine Herr Friedemann*, the idea of Romantic apotheosis is evoked with Friedemann's suicide. Rather than finding order in a 'Liebestod', the chaos of a meaningless death predominates[68]. A similar situation appears to be evoked here, and is interpreted, quite extraordinarily, at face value by Lubich in his ingenious study of Thomas Mann's work. Lubich says the following:

> 'Das Bild von Aschenbachs sozial-etischem Versagen im Leben muß jedoch ergänzt werden durch seine kunstästhetische Selbstvollendung im Tod.'[69]

This is amplified a few pages later, after quoting the reference to Aschenbach's model, the heroic Sebastian figure:

> 'In diesem schönste[n] Sinnbild der Kunst, das Aschenbach sich so bezeichnenderweise von seinem Künstlertum gemacht hatte, vollendet er sein Leben. ...
>
> Dieses Sühne- und Opfermartyrium ist ein Liebestod, wie er im Buche steht.'[70]

Lubich is totally unconvincing when he claims that Aschenbach's 'Leben' is 'vollendet' in death. On the purely realistic level, Aschenbach dies of cholera: how could such a disease be the means to 'kunstästhetische Vollendung'? Lubich is correct to comment that Aschenbach *had* constructed his life around the Sebastian symbol, but the control which once he exercised is allowed to slip, with the result that he becomes a pathetic victim of infatuation which entirely controls him. Hence Aschenbach has so little awareness of his situation that he does *imagine* that this is a 'Liebestod' and that he is following Tadzio to

---

[67]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 641.

[68]See above, p. 157.

[69]Frederick Alfred Lubich, *Die Dialektik von Logos und Eros im Werk von Thomas Mann* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1986), pp. 60-1.

[70]Lubich, pp. 64-5.

death in a kind of Romantic suicide pact[71]. Lubich is however as deluded as Aschenbach, for the text is devastatingly ironic: 'Ihm war, als ob ...'[72]. It is all part of the illusion which Aschenbach has constructed for himself, and, rather than finding meaning in this death, he is completely overtaken by chaos[73].

---

[71]Martina Hoffmann argues that Aschenbach's death is positive because it is an escape from the Schopenhauerian '»Welt der Erscheinungen«' (*Thomas Manns* Der Tod in Venedig: *Eine Entwicklungsgeschichte im Spiegel philosophischer Konzeptionen* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1995), p. 128), but this is equally unconvincing.

[72]There can be times in the narrative when the narrator's condemnation of Aschenbach is so intrusive and so categorical that it could alienate us as readers from the narrator and lead us to be less trusting of what he says (although it is frequently extremely difficult to establish discrepancies in the narrative perspective). (Consider for example the openly sarcastic terms such as 'Meister' and 'Hochgestiegene', applied to Aschenbach just before his second vision of Socrates and Phaidros (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 637). See also Dorrit Cohn, 'The Second Author of »Der Tod in Venedig«', in *Probleme der Moderne. Studien zur deutschen Literatur von Nietzsche bis Brecht. Festschrift für Walter Sokel*, ed. Benjamin Bennett, Anton Kies and William J. Lillyman (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1983), pp. 223-45, for a fuller discussion of this topic.) I am however in disagreement with Eberhard Lämmert when he argues that the narrator in general 'läßt [den Lesern] volle Freiheit in der Wahl ihres Standpunktes' ('Doppelte Optik: Über die Erzählkunst des frühen Thomas Mann', in *Literatur. Sprache. Gesellschaft*, ed. Karl Rüdinger (München: Bayerischer Schulbuchverlag, 1970), p. 70). It is rather the *author* who allows us this 'Freiheit', for the narrator on the contrary actually tries to force us into slavish agreement with him. Having said that, it is difficult to take issue with the accuracy of this 'Ihm war, als ob', since 'liebliche Psychagog' is clearly Aschenbach's own opinion of Tadzio.

[73]Klaus Borchers overlooks the irony, arguing that, since the question is asked in chapter three 'ist nicht das Nichts eine Form des Vollkommenen?' (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 591), that 'das Dionysische' for Mann 'steht für ihn im Assoziationsfeld von Erlösung, Vollendung und Vollkommenheit, von wahrer Erkenntnis' (*Mythos und Gnosis im Werk Thomas Manns: Eine religionswissenschaftliche Untersuchung* (Freiburg: Hochschulverlag, 1980), p. 130). Borchers ignores the fact that that question is asked by *Aschenbach*, in a passage of 'erlebte Rede'. It cannot be interpreted as an authoritative statement on the part of Mann or the narrator. There is no 'Erlösung', and even less 'Erkenntnis', in Aschenbach's death. Peter Heller meanwhile argues that Aschenbach is 'menschlicher, dem Herzen der Welt ... näher' because of his involvement with Tadzio. This may well be true, but he then goes on to suggest that 'die Zerstörung des Zivilisations-Ich' is 'eine nötige, zu bejahende Zerstörung' ('Der *Tod in Venedig* und Thomas Manns *Grund-Motiv*', in *Thomas Mann: Ein Kolloquium*, ed. H. Schalte and G. Chapple (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1978), p. 46). The problem is that this leads directly to his death from cholera, which is hardly 'nötig' or 'zu bejahen'!

The Purpose of 'Love'

The tangible experience of 'love' results predominantly in the experience of chaos, but there are other, symbolic concerns which must also be taken into consideration. In addition to the desire to make meaningful contact with others, there is also a deeper, more spiritual, indeed almost metaphysical purpose to the amatory experience. While the early story *Der kleine Herr Friedemann* has little deeper symbolic significance, *Der Tod in Venedig* is laden with symbolic reference.

This more profound concern is a search for order and permanence which gives life meaning, at the very least for a time. In *Der Tod in Venedig*, it can be seen that the ageing artist, with such a deeply-rooted knowledge and appreciation of all things classical, when he is confronted with Tadzio, immediately channels his interest in him into a meditation on the spiritual value of the contemplation of beauty:

> 'Müde und dennoch geistig bewegt, unterhielt er sich ... mit abstrakten, ja transzendenten Dingen, sann nach über die geheimnisvolle Verbindung, welche das Gesetzmäßige mit dem Individuellen eingehen müsse, damit menschliche Schönheit entstehe, kam von da aus auf allgemeine Probleme der Form und der Kunst und fand am Ende, daß seine Gedanken und Funde gewissen scheinbar glücklichen Einflüsterungen des Traumes glichen, die sich bei ernüchtertem Sinn als vollständig schal und untauglich erweisen.'[74]

The attitude towards the contemplation of beauty which is visible here has its roots primarily in the writings of Plato, whose theory in its most basic form was that 'all objects of knowledge ... were real entities, but ... they did not exist in our world ... [but in] the world of Ideas or Forms'[75]. In Plato's opinion, our own world could only contain imperfect copies of these Forms, but man could, by meditation on these copies, gain an appreciation of the Forms which lay behind them[76]. In *Der Tod in Venedig*, Aschenbach

---

[74]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 587.

[75]Howatson and Chilvers, p. 429.

[76]See further Bernd Effe, 'Sokrates in Venedig. Thomas Mann und die «platonische Liebe»', *Antike und Abendland*, 31 (1985), especially 155.

has observed a specific example of human beauty, to which he is physically attracted (although he is at this stage unaware of that fact), but then, in true Platonic spirit, concentrates on 'transzendente Dinge' and 'allgemeine Probleme der Form und der Kunst'. Hence the goal of such a quest is not specifically absolute order in itself, but the appreciation of an ordered and harmonic universe. The irony in this particular situation is however that such ideas are 'vollständig schal und untauglich': the effort to see the order behind physical beauty has been a failure, and Aschenbach has been forced back into the material world, so much so that the sleep of this apparently controlled and dispassionate artist is that night 'von Traumbildern verschiedentlich belebt'[77].

His initial dissatisfaction with this spiritual dimension to his appreciation of Tadzio is however not the end of the matter. The theme is developed considerably further, and what is envisaged to be the transcendental goal of his erotic encounter is defined rather more precisely, once the erotic nature of his interest in Tadzio has been made explicit as such. The nature of Aschenbach's goal is revealed in the form of a vision. Having spent time watching the beloved on the beach, he imagines Socrates teaching Phaedrus:

> 'Denn die Schönheit, mein Phaidros, nur sie, ist liebenswürdig und sichtbar zugleich: sie ist, merke das wohl! die einzige Form des Geistigen, welche wir sinnlich empfangen, sinnlich ertragen können. ... So ist die Schönheit der Weg des Fühlenden zum Geiste, — nur der Weg, ein Mittel nur, kleiner Phaidros...'[78]

This scene is based on Plato's writings[79]. The goal should not be erotic contact but an appreciation of the transcendental principle of the Form of Beauty and the realm of the Forms in general. At face value this scene appears to be exemplifying this principle, and certainly Aschenbach is correct to emphasise that beauty is only a 'Mittel', a means to an

---

[77]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 587.

[78]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 607.

[79]See Plato, *Phaedrus and the Seventh and Eighth Letters*, trans. Walter Hamilton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), especially pp. 50-57, and *The Symposium*, trans. Walter Hamilton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951), especially pp. 92-4.

end. The emphasis on 'sinnlich' is however a warning and prefiguration of what is to come, for it stresses *particular experiences*, not transcendental truth. Marson is also correct to point out that Aschenbach speaks here of 'das Geistige', which cannot be said to be the equivalent of the Platonic realm of the forms, unless 'das Geistige' 'has some vague meaning such as "the non-physical"'[80]. Does this mean, then, that, when it is proposed that beauty is 'der Weg des Fühlenden zum Geiste', it is not really suggesting transcendental order but in fact something more mundane (although it is not clear precisely what)? The word 'Geist' can, after all, mean not only 'spirit', but also 'intellect' and 'mind'. It should however be stressed that at this stage this presents no more than an ambiguity in the status of Aschenbach's goal: apparently transcendent but possibly inclining towards a more material level. Aschenbach himself is certainly not aware of such a distinction: he believes himself to be acting out the genuine Platonic principle.

How does Aschenbach try to achieve his aim? When he first sees Tadzio, his initial reaction is consistent with Platonic philosophy, channelling the particular experience into contemplation of general principles. (This is entirely in accordance with his character, for his has been a very strict, ordered, controlled life[81].) Not long after his first Platonic ruminations[82], Aschenbach begins his voyeuristic enjoyment of watching Tadzio on the beach. Of particular interest is the following, when he watches the boy coming out of the sea after he has been bathing:

> '... und zu sehen, wie die lebendige Gestalt, vormännlich hold und herb, mit triefenden Locken und schön wie ein zarter Gott, herkommend aus den Tiefen von Himmel und Meer, dem Elemente entstieg und entrann: dieser Anblick

---

[80]Marson, p. 106.

[81]While Aschenbach has certainly devoted his life to order and control, it is also clear that this control is in response to his knowledge of the existence of chaotic forces which threaten him. We have already commented upon the sexual repression he has exerted (see above, p. 154), and there is also a significant comment made by 'ein feiner Beobachter':

> '»Sehen Sie, Aschenbach hat von jeher nur so gelebt« — und der Sprecher schloß die Finger seiner Linken fest zur Faust —; »niemals *so*« — und er ließ die geöffnete Hand bequem von der Lehne des Sessels hängen.' (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 566.)

This sort of conscious control can only mean that his obsessive desire for order is a deep-rooted awareness of forces within his personality which he dare not allow to come to the surface.

[82]See above, p. 165.

> gab mythische Vorstellungen ein, er war wie Dichterkunde von anfänglichen Zeiten, vom Ursprung der Form und von der Geburt der Götter. Aschenbach lauschte mit geschlossenen Augen auf diesen in seinem Innern antönenden Gesang,'[83]

By far the clearest and most important aspect of Aschenbach's change and decline is the way in which he loses the ability and inclination to concentrate his mind on general, universal principles. Instead he becomes more and more infatuated with one individual, which, in terms of Platonic theory, must only be the starting-point. The subversion of Platonic ideals may actually be mirrored at least in part even in this scene: one should be led *from* the human sphere *to* the divine sphere, but Aschenbach likens Tadzio to 'ein zarter Gott, herkommend aus den Tiefen von Himmel und Meer'. In the first place, the references to the sea suggest, not the ordered harmony of the Platonic universe, but a kind of primeval energy[84]. In the second place, Tadzio is '*her*kommend' *from* 'Himmel'. This is the opposite of the true Platonic progression which Aschenbach originally wanted to undertake. It could be argued that the 'Ursprung der Form' has a Platonic ring to it, but the *origin* of form bespeaks no more than the transition from a pre-creation era of absolute chaos. Far more important for Aschenbach's development, however, is his response, whereby he does not have recourse to intellectualism, but instead listens to the 'antönenden Gesang' within him. He has already begun to turn away from his concern with order to seek some kind of sensual excitement.

Despite this reorientation apparent in Aschenbach's attitude, it would be wrong to suggest that *Der Tod in Venedig* traces a straight-line decline in moral rectitude. Aschenbach's situation is highly ambivalent, and a large part of the 'Novelle' is devoted to the subtle variation in his motivations and standpoint vis-à-vis his involvement with Tadzio. A little further on in the story, Aschenbach is again watching the boy:

---

[83]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 594.

[84]Martina Hoffmann makes a further interesting connection between the sea and Dionysus, 'der sich einst vor seinen Widersachern in eine Meereshöhle versteckt hielt, um dann aber um so machtvoller dem Meer wieder zu entsteigen,' (p. 68), thus making the connections with chaos, and therefore the antithesis of Platonic ideas, all the stronger.

> 'Seine Augen umfaßten die edle Gestalt dort am Rande des Blauen, und in aufschwärmendem Entzücken glaubte er mit diesem Blick das Schöne selbst zu begreifen, die Form als Gottesgedanken, die eine und reine Vollkommenheit, die im Geiste lebt und von der ein menschliches Abbild und Gleichnis hier leicht und hold zur Anbetung aufgerichtet war. Das war der Rausch;'[85]

This is a particularly good example of this ambivalence. On the one hand there is an explicit assertion of the Plato-inspired search for order by means of a sensuous experience: Aschenbach believes he has, through Tadzio, caught a glimpse of 'die eine und reine Vollkommenheit', which can only be a reference to the Form of Beauty. It is important to notice that Aschenbach does not envisage Tadzio himself as 'das Schöne', but he is rather 'ein menschliches Abbild und Gleichnis'. Aschenbach seems to recognise that the individual example of beauty should only be a means to an end and not an end in itself. There is however a simultaneous opposing viewpoint in the subtly ironic phrase '*glaubte* er...': this is not a statement of reality but one of Aschenbach's subjective evaluation of the situation. Of greater importance is the fact that he perceives this image of beauty as being there 'zur Anbetung'. This suggests no longer means to end but an end in itself. This is then confirmed by the narrator who comments, 'Das war der Rausch', which is the exact opposite of the coolly intellectual state which ought to have been attained. He is being pulled in two opposing directions, both towards the spiritual *and* towards the physical.

Shortly after this episode, Aschenbach has his vision of Socrates and Phaedrus, analysed already[86]. Aschenbach's imprecise interpretation of Plato at that stage is coupled with another factor, namely that all of this sequence is a rêverie, and thus, like the 'Rausch' of a few pages before, opposed to order and control. In this way, Aschenbach's orientation has now become slightly less ambivalent, tending more decisively in the direction of the erotic experience for its own sake. This episode is soon to be followed by his admission of love for Tadzio, the turning-point after which his desire for order

---

[85]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 606.

[86]See above, p. 166.

through 'love' becomes completely replaced by infatuation[87].

So what marks the definitive end of a search for Platonic order? On one level there is the recurring 'Leitmotiv' of Aschenbach's vision of the exotic Eastern jungle landscape, first included in the story as an apparent indication of his 'Reiselust'[88], but then, significantly, recurring later as the place of origin of the Indian cholera epidemic which is sweeping Venice. It is on his discovery of the source of the epidemic, which is clearly linked with the deep-rooted forces of Dionysian chaos which we already know to be embedded in his psychological make-up, that Aschenbach surrenders himself more or less totally to those forces. Not only does he become unable to draw general principles from specific circumstances, he has no inclination whatsoever to do so. The symbolism of the 'Novelle' does, however, add a final dimension to the Platonic concern which is heavily laden with irony and serves to reveal conclusively the total failure of the quest, and that is when Aschenbach has a second vision of Socrates and Phaedrus:

> '»... nur die Schönheit ist göttlich und sichtbar zugleich, und so ist sie denn also des Sinnlichen Weg, ist, kleiner Phaidros, der Weg des Künstlers zum Geiste. ... Oder glaubst du ..., daß dies ein gefährlich-lieblicher Weg sei, wahrhaft ein Irr- und Sündenweg, der mit Notwendigkeit in die Irre leitet? Denn du mußt wissen, daß wir Dichter den Weg der Schönheit nicht gehen können, ohne daß Eros sich zugesellt und sich zum Führer aufwirft;«'[89]

In the first of his Socratic visions[90], Aschenbach visualised Socrates talking to Phaedrus. In this second vision, it is he himself who is acting out the rôle of Socrates. The irony is, however, that just as Aschenbach is hardly Socrates[91], the philosophy he puts forward is a

---

[87]A clear indication of his obsessive love for the boy is as follows:

> 'Denn der Verliebte besorgte nichts, als daß Tadzio abreisen könnte, und erkannte nicht ohne Entsetzen, daß er nicht mehr zu leben wissen werde, wenn das geschähe.'

(Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 616.)

[88]'er sah, sah eine Landschaft, ein tropisches Sumpfgebiet unter dickdunstigem Himmel, feucht, üppig und ungeheuer, eine Art Urweltwildnis aus Inseln, Morästen und Schlamm führenden Wasserarmen, — ... sah zwischen den knotigen Rohrstämmmen des Bambusdickichts die Lichter eines kauernden Tigers funkeln —'
(Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 562.)

[89]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, pp. 637-8.

[90]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, pp. 606-7.

[91]David Eggenschwiler suggests that 'the passage ... [is] spoken in the voice of a true psychological

distortion of the Platonic dialogues. While Aschenbach/Socrates is correct to acknowledge that the power of Eros inevitably makes itself felt when the individual contemplates an example of physical beauty, the original Socrates' contention is that it should be possible to overcome that to see the Form supposed to lie behind it. The concentration on poets and artists is also a curious addition to Platonic doctrine. It is at this point that this passage would appear to become suffused with Nietzschean concepts. According to Nietzsche in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, the artist should give form ('the veil of the Apollonian'[92]) to the primeval instincts and sensual drives which lie deep within us ('the Dionysian'[93]), but this is what Aschenbach fails to do. This inevitably brings the artist into contact with the Dionysian instincts and can lead him 'in die Irre'. In this way, the ageing artist's failure is definitive, in Nietzschean terms as well as Platonic. The experience of 'love' is the finding of chaos, and the search for order in 'love' is also the finding of chaos.

"otherness"' and therefore 'lightly forgives him by making him part of a community of the guilty' ('The Very Glance of Art: Ironic Narrative in Mann's *Novellen*', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 48 (1987), 72). Personally I find a very heavy emphasis on Aschenbach's delusion and the glaring differences between his behaviour and the behaviour advocated by the Platonic dialogues.

[92]'... so würde diese Dissonanz ... eine herrliche Illusion brauchen, die ihr einen Schönheitsschleier über ihr eigenes Wesen decken. Dies ist die wahre Kunstabsicht des Apollo, usw.' (Nietzsche, *Werke*, I, p. 133).

[93]See below, p. 219.

Franz Kafka

The Experience of 'Love'

Kafka does not present a single work devoted to an erotic theme, but the erotic is nonetheless of considerable importance in both *Der Prozeß* and *Das Schloß*, both continuing and developing traits already observed in the children in *Der Prozeß*. The erotic relationships in Kafka's writings are coloured by his own disastrous encounters with women: his inability to form a stable relationship with a woman (exemplified by the way he broke off his engagement to Felice Bauer twice) caused him to adopt a rather biased view of women in general. This has the result that his treatment of women in his literary works can tend to be somewhat idiosyncratic, and thus less well suited to a comparative study. Nevertheless, comparison will prove that the 'love' relationships do reflect something of more general European concerns.

What is most clear in *Der Prozeß* and *Das Schloß* is that the 'love' in question is sensual, not spiritual. Not only that, it is an extreme, explicit lust which is quick to be consummated, rather than the more Romantic 'worshipping from afar' we noted in Mann's work. This is evident even in chapter I of *Der Prozeß:*

> '[K.] lief vor, faßte [Fräulein Bürstner], küßte sie auf den Mund und dann über das ganze Gesicht, wie ein durstiges Tier mit der Zunge über das endlich gefundene Quellwasser hinjagt. Schließlich küßte er sie auf den Hals, wo die Gürgel ist, und dort ließ er die Lippen lange liegen.'[94]

While in this novel the main theme is guilt[95], and thus this text is less relevant for this thesis than *Das Schloß*, nevertheless the similarities between the two novels as far as 'love' is concerned justify its inclusion. K. is motivated here by a desire for sexual gratification: barely is he introduced to Fräulein Bürstner than his sexual drive takes

---

[94]Kafka, *Der Prozeß*, pp. 30-31.

[95]See Politzer, *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox*, p. 200.

over[96]. It is interesting that K. first kisses her on the mouth, which is indicative of human bonding, but then finally comes to rest on her throat, which is associated much less with mutual inclination. This suggests already an emptiness in the amatory experience, and that rather than a union for the two individuals' mutual benefit, it is more the fulfilment of a biological function[97].

Does sensuality have an all-consuming quality for K., as it does for Friedemann and Aschenbach? Appropriate to a story which is not primarily a tale of love, K. is not totally overwhelmed by desire to the exclusion of all else. When he comes into contact with women, however, his desire grips him to such an extent that other concerns are very much subordinated. Thus when in chapter six K.'s uncle takes him to see a lawyer, the lawyer's maid Leni captures his attention and distracts him from his interview with her master, which is ostensibly far more important[98]. The sound of Leni breaking porcelain is enough to draw him from his interview altogether, and, after a brief discussion of the trial, in which Leni does little more than reflect one of K.'s own opinions, the seduction takes place. When K. kisses Leni, this is her reaction:

> 'Eilig, mit offenem Mund erkletterte sie mit den Knien seinen Schoß. K. sah fast bestürzt zu ihr auf, jetzt, da sie ihm so nahe war, ging ein bitterer, aufreizender Geruch wie von Pfeffer von ihr aus, sie nahm seinen Kopf an sich, beugte sich über ihn hinweg und biß und küßte seinen Hals,'[99]

Degrading physicality dominates this scene, and, while Leni certainly takes a more active rôle than Fräulein Bürstner, K. does not resist. Critics often, when discussing eroticism in

---

[96]It should be noted that Fräulein Bürstner too is somewhat provocative:

> '[K.] war ganz vom Anblick des Fräulein Bürstner ergriffen, die das Gesicht auf eine Hand stützte ... während die andere Hand langsam die Hüfte strich.'

(Kafka, *Der Prozeß*, p. 28.)

[97]Britta Maché compares K. with fellow-lodger Lanz, suggesting that Lanz 'possesses ... natural, self-confident and poised sexuality' and that K. feels he lacks this 'affirmative eroticism' ('The Bürstner Affair and its Significance for the Courtroom Scenes and the End of Kafka's *Prozeß*', *German Quarterly*, 65 (1992), 21). There is however never any direct illustration of 'affirmative eroticism' in Kafka's work, but rather empty lust.

[98]'Übrigens wußte er kaum, wovon die Rede war und dachte bald an die Pflegerin' (Kafka, *Der Prozeß*, p. 92).

[99]Kafka, *Der Prozeß*, p. 96.

Kafka, concentrate on the similarities between Kafka's portrayal of women and Viennese philosopher Otto Weininger's theories about women in general[100]. Weininger theorised that 'Das absolute Weib hat kein Ich'[101] and that women are primarily concerned with the seduction of men:

> 'Die [absolute Mutter] nimmt jeden beliebigen Mann, der ihr zum Kinde dienlich ist, ... Die [absolute Kokette] gibt sich jedem beliebigen Mann, der ihr zum erotischen Genusse verhilft:'[102]

Men are thus the innocent victims, tempted and seduced by women, while women are no more than sex objects. Leni's behaviour, arousing K. sexually, is a good example of the similarities with Weininger's philosophy[103]. Furthermore, the relationship is completely empty and meaningless, for *both* parties. This is illustrated by the way in which one woman is easily exchanged for another: Fräulein Bürstner, the washerwoman, Leni. The sense of the disordered, chaotic world which is typical in Kafka is surfacing again when individuals attempt to form 'one-to-one' relationships.

A similar pattern can be seen in *Das Schloß*. Brief comment was made earlier on the way in which K. is side-tracked by sexual desire from his quest to enter the castle[104]. This however does not do sufficient justice to the erotic inclinations in the novel. While the physicality is very similar to that in *Der Prozeß*, the K.-Frieda relationship is one which is much more fully developed than any of Josef K.'s encounters. Before K. and Frieda come together, however, the reader has already been confronted with the overt sexuality which seems to be a major part of male-female relationships in this village:

---

[100]See for example Reiner Stach, *Kafkas erotischer Mythos: Eine ästhetische Konstruktion des Weiblichen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987).

[101]Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung*, 22nd ed. (Wien: Braumüller, 1921), p. 232.

[102]Weininger, p. 281. See also Politzer, *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox*, p. 198.

[103]See also Kuna, p. 172ff. Wolf Kittler, without mentioning Weininger, makes the additional relevant comment that the way two fingers of Leni's right hand are joined 'ist ein Kennzeichen der Sirenen' ('Die Klauen der Sirenen', *Modern Language Notes*, 108 (1993), 512).

[104]See above, p. 109.

> 'Aber die Bauern ließen [Olga] nicht, sie hatten einen Tanz erfunden, dessen Mittelpunkt Olga war, im Reigen tanzten sie herum, ... die Schreie, hungrig, röchelnd, wurden allmählich fast ein einziger. Olga ... taumelte nur noch mit aufgelöstem Haar von einem zum anderen.'[105]

The adjectives 'hungrig' and 'röchelnd' recall *Der Prozeß* and the animalistic passions of Leni ('[sie] biß ... seinen Hals'[106]) and Josef K. ('wie ein durstiges Tier'[107]). Passion takes over in such a way that, at least for a time, it robs people of some of their status as individual human beings. The erotic dance is something which Olga cannot escape, and indeed she loses her identity, becoming merely one body amongst so many other bodies. Stach, in his analysis of *Der Prozeß*, argues that Josef K. suffers 'eine Auflösung von Individualität' in his experiences with women, but this is also applicable here:

> 'Die Fluchtlinie, die zur Frau führt, ist weit geöffnet. Nur wartet an ihrem Ende nicht Erlösung, nicht einmal Befriedigung, sondern Verdinglichung, Zerstreuung, Auflösung von Individualität.'[108]

Stach's study of Kafka's creative writing argues that Kafka had a general theory, without actually writing it down, about the intrinsic characteristics of womanhood. *Das Schloß*, however, demonstrates that it may be somewhat misguided to claim that there is a general principle of 'das Weibliche'[109]. What is happening to Olga in this erotic encounter is precisely what Stach argues is supposed to happen to *men* at the hands of women. Olga 'wird verdinglicht' in the quite literal meaning of 'dinglich machen'[110]: she becomes something material with which the men can play, and her individuality disappears. In this

---

[105]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 41.

[106]Kafka, *Der Prozeß*, p. 96.

[107]Kafka, *Der Prozeß*, p. 30.

[108]Stach, p. 60.

[109]Stach argues that men's individuality is 'aufgelöst' by their union with women because women are, according to Weininger, 'ohne ich'. While Stach admits (p. 112) that the Weininger standards do not apply so much in *Das Schloß*, he does not revise his thesis that Kafka has a theory of 'das Weibliche'. Such a theory is severely weakened if the women of *Das Schloß* do not fit the mould into which Stach wishes to squeeze them. Furthermore, such a restricted view obscures the effects of erotic encounters on *women* as well as on men. If women are 'ohne ich', then Olga ought to be no more than a 'thing' throughout the novel, which is far from the truth.

[110]*Deutsches Wörterbuch*, ed. Gerhard Wahrig, rev. ed. (München: Mosaik, 1986), p. 1356.

way, even early in the novel we begin to realise that the erotic impulse, in Kafka as well as in Mann, can be an enemy of life, even although Josef K., K. and Olga do not die as a result of their erotic involvement, as do Friedemann and Aschenbach.

But what of K. in *Das Schloß*? When Olga is dancing with the men, K. and Frieda meet, and it is not long before they become lovers amidst the puddles of beer on the tap-room floor:

> 'Sie umfaßten einander, der kleine Körper brannte in K.s Händen, sie rollten in einer Besinnungslosigkeit, aus der sich K. fortwährend, aber vergeblich, zu retten suchte, ein paar Schritte weit, schlugen dumpf an Klamms Tür und lagen dann in den kleinen Pfützen Biers und dem sonstigen Unrat,'[111]

It was argued previously that this scene is illustrative of a 'love' which is 'a trivial, shallow side-track which is likely to hinder man's quest for the Absolute'[112], and the squalid, sordid nature of this situation, and the 'Besinnungslosigkeit' from which K. cannot extricate himself, do much to support that argument. In this present context it also illustrates that passion, when it is aroused, cannot be denied or sublimated but demands one's whole attention, at least until the somewhat inevitable anti-climax and realisation of its meaninglessness and pointlessness:

> 'Dort vergingen Stunden, ... in denen K. immerfort das Gefühl hatte, er verirre sich oder er sei so weit in der Fremde, wie vor ihm noch kein Mensch, einer Fremde, in der selbst die Luft keinen Bestandteil der Heimatluft habe, in der man vor Fremdheit ersticken müsse und in deren unsinnigen Verlockungen man doch nichts tun könne als weiter gehen, weiter sich verirren.'[113]

The disillusionment has already taken place, even as they are lying together on the floor. The experience of love-making has led to an acute sense of existential isolation and chaos[114], emphasised by K.'s separation from his homeland. In addition, it is a state from

---

[111]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 43.

[112]See above, p. 109.

[113]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, pp. 43-4.

[114]I find Sheppard's argument (p. 95) that this scene gives 'an insight into Frieda's essential ability to make

which it is difficult for K. to liberate himself. 'Love' thus seems to be an enemy for K.: something else which requires to be conquered in order that he might reach his goal. This hostile characteristic of the erotic experience is also an indication that the more he 'verirrt sich', the more his 'Individualität' will become 'aufgelöst', as happens with Olga.

Kafka's horror at the prospect of 'die Auflösung von Individualität', which granted he generally saw as *more* the fate of men than of women, is so abhorrent to him that there are instances in which total sexual abstinence seems infinitely preferable. This abhorrence of risking one's identity in sex becomes incorporated into his creative writing, most obviously in the way that Josef K. and K. both refuse to commit themselves to their relationships with women: this lack of commitment is the only way for K., for example, to avoid being forced 'weiter sich zu verirren'. It may well in fact be this attitude of aggression and defiance which, resulting in the refusal to submit totally to the power of physical desire, prevents him from being the hopeless victim of infatuation which leads to tragedy for Friedemann and Aschenbach. The irony here is that, intermingled with this malevolent sexual impulse, is the force of the castle which, despite K.'s initial aggression, cannot be conquered.

Egocentrism in erotic relationships is also present in *Das Schloß*. We saw that Friedemann's tragedy is caused by the way in which his beloved is only interested in herself. It is this type of egocentrism which occurs in Kafka's two novels. Josef K. of *Der Prozeß* has no affection for any of the women with whom he becomes involved, demonstrated by the way in which he exchanges Fräulein Bürstner for the washerwoman, then the washerwoman for Leni. He is selfish and uncaring, even to the point of brutality[115]. K. of *Das Schloß* is similar to Josef K., although his involvement with Frieda is more intense. In the earlier part of the novel, there appears to be a concern for Frieda, expressed most notably by his intention to marry her, although he selfishly announces the

---

even the most squalid environment habitable' very unconvincing, although there is evidence of this elsewhere. See below, p. 178, note 118.

[115]When K. informs Kaufmann Block and Leni of his intention to dismiss the lawyer, Leni runs after him as he is entering the lawyer's room. K. however 'drückte ihr Handgelenk so stark, daß sie unter einem Seufzer ihn loslassen mußte' (Kafka, *Der Prozeß*, p. 157).

engagement without prior consultation with Frieda[116]. This selfishness becomes much more obvious when, later in the novel, he steadily neglects her, spending less time with her and more time with Olga and her family, until eventually Frieda leaves him and returns to the 'Herrenhof'.

Kafka's presentation of women in this later novel is more subtle than in *Der Prozeß*. The earlier work shows a distinct bias towards the seductive power of women, into whose trap men must fall, but now Frieda is a much more rounded personality, and it is she who is more of a victim. Her relationship with K. causes her considerable distress and upset, and it is *she* who is the more faithful one:

> '»Ich werde dieses Leben hier nicht ertragen. Willst du mich behalten, müssen wir auswandern, irgendwohin, nach Südfrankreich, nach Spanien.« — »Auswandern kann ich nicht«, sagte K., »ich bin hierhergekommen, um hier zu bleiben.« ... »Klamm sollte mir fehlen?« sagte Frieda ... »Nicht Klamm, sondern du fehlst mir, deinetwegen will ich fort, weil ich mich an dir nicht sättigen kann,«'[117]

What is striking is that Frieda appears to give herself wholeheartedly to K. There is an image of a true love relationship, where the two come together and live only for each other[118]. At the same time we see K.'s own selfishness, however: the ideal which Frieda proposes is flatly rejected. Thus this same attitude of aggressive commitment to his quest to enter the castle continually reasserts itself, with the result that Frieda is cast aside.

Frieda's vision of happy romantic involvement is of further interest. First, because, even if K. had been more favourably disposed towards it, it is no more than an unrealistic dream with no hope of fulfilment. Emigration means escaping the village and

---

[116]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 48.

[117]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 133.

[118]While sexual relationships in Kafka tend to be conducted in 'Schmutz und Elend' (see below, p. 183), Jeong-Suk Kim makes the interesting point that, when K. and Frieda are resident in the school-room, 'Frieda beseitigt Schmutz und Kälte und bewahrt damit den Raum vor Verödung' (*Franz Kafka: Darstellung und Funktion des Raumes in »Der Prozeß« und »Das Schloß«* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1983), p. 123), again emphasising the more positive presentation of Frieda compared with the women in *Der Prozeß*.

the castle, and the labyrinthine quality which seems to characterise them both must mean that it is as difficult to find the way out as it is to find the centre: it would be an attempt to escape the inescapable. This in turn suggests that a meaningful relationship is not possible. The second point of relevance in this regard can be seen when Frieda elucidates her vision further:

> '»... während ich doch kein größeres Glück für mich weiß, als bei dir zu sein, ... während ich doch davon träume, daß hier auf der Erde kein ruhiger Platz für unsere Liebe ist, ... und ich mir deshalb ein Grab vorstelle, tief und eng; dort halten wir uns umarmt wie mit Zangen, ich verberge mein Gesicht an dir, du deines an mir, und niemand wird uns jemals mehr sehen.«'[119]

For an author who has become almost synonymous with *Angst*, what Frieda says here is astonishingly similar to a Romantic 'Liebestod'. The suicide pact was the typical method for the two unhappy lovers to escape from a world which was rejecting them and to find a new freedom. As was the case with Mann, however, it is subverted: the relationship is not even able to develop to the extent that death is a possibility. Frieda is condemned to carry on living and to return to her previous existence, only bruised by her experience, although the very fact that she does so willingly in the company of K.'s assistants, Jeremias and Artur, does suggest that perhaps she is not quite the selfless, innocent victim she has presented herself as being[120], and thus her vision is little more than an empty dream. The experience of 'love' proves to be little more than a symptom of the disordered, chaotic world which Kafka's protagonists inhabit.

---

[119]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 134.

[120]In addition, K. says to Frieda, '»Noch immer bist du Klamms Geliebte, noch lange nicht meine Frau' (*Das Schloß*, p. 136). See also Binder, p. 314.

The Purpose of 'Love'

Given that 'love' in Kafka is an expression of base, animal passion, it seems remarkable that there should be any point in even broaching the subject of there being a purpose to 'love' in his works. Despite the defeat, which is no more than an inevitable concomitant of all the undertakings of Kafka's protagonists, these same protagonists do seem to continue to entertain hopes regarding sexual encounters, however much they are based on delusion. It was argued above that 'the male-female relationship ... hinders man's quest for the Absolute'[121]: it is now time to discuss, first, what is expected to be gained, and second, the way in which things go wrong.

While the situations regarding male-female relationships in *Der Prozeß* and *Das Schloß* are certainly similar, the former book does not deal so much with the quest for order as with the concept of guilt, and it would therefore be appropriate to concentrate our discussion now on *Das Schloß*. K. and Frieda both imagine their relationship to be a search:

> 'Dort lagen sie, aber nicht so hingegeben wie damals in der Nacht. Sie suchte etwas, und er suchte etwas, ... und ihre Umarmungen und ihre sich aufwerfenden Körper machten sie nicht vergessen, sondern erinnerten sie an die Pflicht, zu suchen, wie Hunde verzweifelt im Boden scharren, so scharrten sie an ihren Körpern; und hilflos, enttäuscht, um noch letztes Glück zu holen, fuhren manchmal ihre Zungen breit über des anderen Gesicht.'[122]

The principal activity seems to be 'searching', but why, and for what? The goal is completely unspecified; indeed, it appears likely from the context that neither K. nor Frieda knows for what he or she is looking. One indication lies in the phrase 'die *Pflicht*, zu suchen'. This suggests that they hope for more than mere sexual gratification, for some deeper fulfilment, something of lasting value and satisfaction. The reference to dogs which are 'verzweifelt' on the other hand conveys a sense of desperation to find something which is probably not there. This is coupled with a feeling of frustration,

---

[121]See above, p. 109.

[122]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 47.

conveyed by 'hilflos, enttäuscht'. The failure is then intensified by the phrases 'um noch letztes Glück zu holen, fuhren manchmal ihre Zungen breit über des anderen Gesicht', since this empty physicality will hardly be a source of 'letztes Glück'. It is also a clear indication that sexual gratification is no more than a substitute for whatever deeper fulfilment it was they failed to find.

Other instances of Frieda's and K.'s relationship, however, serve to define better the nature of its purpose. In general terms, K.'s primary interest is seeking to enter the castle, whatever the cost, and his desperation to fulfil that desire means that he is prepared to enlist the help of anyone who offers it. Does K. see anything different when he approaches Frieda? Gardena, the landlady of the 'Brückenhof', tells us something of the significance which K. must imagine Frieda to have:

> '»Sie haben Frieda aus dem glücklichsten Zustand gerissen, der ihr je beschieden war, ... Sie hat Sie gerettet und sich dabei geopfert.«'[123]

We know that this forms part of Frieda's apparent (but in actual fact illusory) act of mediation on behalf of K.[124] Why does K. imagine that Frieda has a special status and ability? The landlady depicts her as having been in something akin to a state of grace, stemming from her association with the castle. Given that the castle is an image at least *potentially* of absolute order, then to be associated with it must represent, at least for those who seek to enter it, having made contact with that order. (The fact that the accuracy of this interpretation of Frieda's situation is at best highly equivocal forms part of the basis of the tragic vision of the novel.) Within the imagery of the novel, then, the primary goal which K. sees as inspiring him to become involved with Frieda is the same metaphysical one, for which he left home and family to seek. To imagine that this is the only goal he envisages for the relationship would however be an oversimplification. Let us consider his first real 'overture' to Frieda when he is in the 'Herrenhof' in chapter three:

---

[123]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 55.

[124]See above, p. 107f.

> '»Aus Ihren Augen, lachen Sie mich nicht aus, Fräulein Frieda, spricht nicht so sehr der vergangene, als der zukünftige Kampf. Aber die Widerstände der Welt sind groß, sie werden größer mit den größeren Zielen, und es ist keine Schande, sich die Hilfe selbst eines kleinen, einflußlosen, aber ebenso kämpfenden Mannes zu sichern.«'[125]

K.'s initial statement would appear to be a reiteration of his selfish desire to use Frieda as a mediator: since she has the ability to fight for what she wants, she should be able to do so for K. as well. The second part of the above quotation however suggests that K. envisages a benefit for Frieda if she is associated with K. K. thus appears to broach the possibility of a relationship which is of value to both parties, where they can both face the world *together*. (This is of course hypocrisy, for K.'s egocentricity causes Frieda only distress.) This nevertheless does not invalidate the vision of the goal which is seen for 'love': first, as an additional means to the end of attaining the castle and order (and therefore linked conceptually, although clearly not literally, with the Platonic view of the love relationship as observed in *Der Tod in Venedig*); second, as the possible prospect of a mutually satisfying interpersonal relationship.

How does K. attempt to achieve these goals? The aim of a meaningful interpersonal relationship is defeated from the beginning, but what of the metaphysical purpose? There can be no hope of a genuine Platonic love relationship: in the male-female relationships in Kafka's writings, the physical instincts establish themselves so quickly and so overwhelmingly that the will to meditation (if there be one) has no opportunity to assert itself. It only takes a brief introduction before K. and Frieda spend their night of love-making on the tap-room floor. Perhaps a better example of how much physical desire obstructs all higher ideals is seen a little later in the novel when K. first encounters Pepi:

> 'Und doch, trotz ihrem kindlichen Unverstand hatte auch sie wahrscheinlich Beziehungen zum Schloß; ... eine Umarmung dieses kleinen, dicken, ein wenig rundrückigen Körpers konnte ihr zwar den Besitz nicht entreißen, konnte aber an ihn rühren und aufmuntern für den schweren Weg. Dann war

---

[125]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, pp. 40-41.

> es vielljecht nicht anders als bei Frieda? O doch, es war anders. Man mußte nur an Friedas Blick denken, um das zu verstehen. Niemals hätte K. Pepi angerührt. Aber doch mußte er jetzt für ein Weilchen seine Augen bedecken, so gierig sah er sie an.'[126]

The 'erlebte Rede' allows us to see that K.'s thoughts dwell on Pepi's physical appearance, unattractive as she evidently is. K. does not attempt the cool, analytical contemplation of beauty. If we look at this passage in the light of Platonic philosophy, then it provides an excellent parody of it. We do not have an earthly example of the transcendent Form of Beauty, we have a 'kleinen, dicken, ein wenig rundrückigen Körper[]', and, rather than meditation, we have the scheming calculation of whether or not Pepi could be of use to him. Hence K. does treat 'love' as a means of reaching the absolute order supposedly residing in the castle, but the fact that animal lust immediately interferes means that in no way can it link itself with a higher, purer realm[127]. The additional knowledge that mediation between village and castle is hopeless anyway[128], not only for men seeking women but also for the women who seek involvement with the officials[129], means that merely having sexual relations performs no useful purpose either, but is in fact rather more of a hindrance, especially for men[130].

The women's involvement with the officials in the novel also demands attention. Much of the critical literature which deals with the rôle of the women in Kafka dwells on the similarities between his attitudes and those of Otto Weininger[131]. While the

---

[126]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 98.

[127]Kafka himself complains to Milena Jesenská, 'Schmutzig bin ich Milena, endlos schmutzig' ('Brief an Milena Jesenská', 26. August 1920, *Briefe an Milena*, ed. Jürgen Born and Michael Müller (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1986), p. 228), and makes a further similar comment to Gustav Janouch:

> 'Der Weg zur Liebe führt immer durch Schmutz und Elend. Die Verachtung des Weges könnte aber leicht zum Verlust des Zieles führen.'

(Janouch, p. 242. Also quoted in Hildegard Platzer, 'Sex, Marriage and Guilt: The Dilemma of Mating in Kafka', *Mosaic*, 3 (1970), 124.) The second sentence here illustrates the belief that there could be something positive to be gained from 'love', despite the evidence of its sordid physicality.

[128]See above, p. 108.

[129]Consider, for example, Olga's promiscuous behaviour to try to 'redeem' her family.

[130]See also Larysa Mykyta, 'Woman as the Obstacle and the Way', *Modern Language Notes*, 90 (1980), 634.

[131]See above, p. 174.

Weininger approach is not an invalid one, it can obscure our vision of the women, at least some of whom in *Das Schloß* are more rounded human beings than such an approach suggests, and consequently capable of their own attitudes towards 'love'[132]. Gardena perceives Frieda's position as Klamm's lover as a means of entering a blissful state[133]; this is reinforced by her statement regarding her own involvement with Klamm:

> '»ohne die drei Dinge [von Klamm] hätte ich es hier nicht so lange ausgehalten,«'[134]

And then slightly later in the same conversation:

> '»Wen [Klamm] nicht mehr rufen läßt, den hat er nicht nur für die Vergangenheit völlig vergessen, sondern förmlich auch für alle Zukunft.«'[135]

Gardena's position raises the question of women and authority. Stach, following Weininger, claims that women are able to penetrate and inhabit the corridors of power and authority simply because they are women. Comparing the petty, detail-obsessed 'Gemeindevorsteher' with the power Gardena claims for the 'Gemeindevorsteher's' wife and herself[136], Stach says the following:

> 'Während die Männer um kleinste Vorteile taktieren, ... treffen »gelegentlich« die Frauen — man versteht nicht, aufgrund welcher Kompetenz — die höherrangigen, schicksalbestimmenden Entscheidungen.'[137]

The first and most obvious contradiction of this assertion is the indisputable fact that everyone in the village is subordinate to, and indeed willingly defers to, Klamm. If he

---

[132]While Wilhelm Emrich is certainly original in his interpretation of women (pp. 391-3), I can find little evidence to support the claim that Klamm's women are, specifically, barmaids or landladies because 'Klamm's draught [is] a resumption of the ancient fairy-tale motif of the love potion'.

[133]See above, p. 181.

[134]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 78.

[135]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 82.

[136]'»Was der Vorsteher über Sie verfügt hat, hat keine Bedeutung, und mit der Frau werde ich gelegentlich reden.«' (Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 85.)

[137]Stach, pp. 184-5.

took a decision, nobody, male or female, would ever deny its validity (although admittedly he never does so in the entire novel). In addition, while Stach is certainly right to point out the feverish obsession with details of so many officials, there is no evidence that, if Gardena were to speak to the 'Gemeindevorsteher's' wife, it would have any benefit. What is more, while Gardena certainly has more authority in the inn than her husband, it is her one-time association with *Klamm* that has given her this authority. It is *not* simply because she is a woman. Not only that, it is a poor shadow of the apparent bliss she once enjoyed as his lover. She has been forgotten 'für alle Zukunft', and it is only the memory of that relationship which enables her to endure the inn. Thus, the two women who clearly are in a stronger position than K. (Frieda and Gardena) are in that position because of their amatory experiences, and this would appear to suggest that those experiences have had genuine benefits. There is therefore a parallel emerging between the women's attitudes and the attitudes of K.: 'love' is seen as a means to an end, and erotic encounters with officials may result in contact with the castle and thus an apparent finding of a greater sense of order[138]. But if some of the women have proved more successful than K., the positive effect of the amatory encounter is still, crucially, somewhat transient. In general terms, then, 'love' is at best highly equivocal, and, for the protagonist, entirely futile.

---

[138]Olga echoes this sentiment in her acts of prostitution in the hope that such behaviour will lead to her family's atonement. Pepi, meanwhile, at the end of the novel imagines that even a union with K. would help her situation. Unlike Frieda and Gardena, however, there is no sign of possible success.

The Experience of 'Love'

The sexual awakening was for Cernuda and his personae a discovery of the power of erotic desire and the first cause of alienation. The two collections written after his departure from his native Seville in 1928, *Un río, un amor* and *Los placeres prohibidos*, then deal directly with what was probably the first real experience of love[139], and then the subsequent collection, *Donde habite el olvido*, focusses on the aftermath of that disastrous relationship[140]. There is also a second major experience of love, which took the form of an affair while in Mexico. This particular affair inspired the late poem cycle 'Poemas para un cuerpo', which forms the later part of *Con las horas contadas*. The two experiences are markedly different, however, because in the later one Cernuda had a rare moment of contentment. It is therefore appropriate to discuss the earlier poetry first, analysing the ways in which the adolescent expectations of desire are developed, fulfilled and then frustrated, before exploring the later amatory encounter.

We are by now well aware of the essentially sensual, erotic nature of the love which is involved in both Mann and Kafka and indeed with Cernuda's *Primeras Poesías*. Not surprisingly, this kind of eroticism continues throughout Cernuda's creative oeuvre. Cernuda's poetry is however complex, and there is a range of aspects involved. In 'Sombras blancas' from *Un río, un amor*, there is a one-sided sensuous voyeuristic excitement, enjoyed purely for its own sake. It merits its inclusion here for the interesting similarity it bears to the voyeurism which Aschenbach enjoys in his 'relationship' with Tadzio:

> 'Sombras frágiles, blancas, dormidas en la playa,
> Dormidas en su amor, en su flor de universo,

---

[139]Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 34, 'Both these books are concerned in part with what seems to have been an experience of unrequited love, or at least of a failed dream of love.'

[140]Whatever the specific circumstances of the experience which inspired the poetry, the poems themselves do suggest an actual love affair on the part of the persona(e).

El ardiente color de la vida ignorando
Sobre un lecho de arena y de azar abolido.

Libremente los besos desde sus labios caen
En el mar indomable como perlas inútiles;'[141]

I agree with Silver's interpretation that the 'sombras' refers to 'boys playing on the beach'[142], bringing the circumstances of this poem close to those of Aschenbach watching Tadzio and Jascha[143]. The poem expresses a state of innocence before the sexual awakening. The 'flor' of the second line is, I believe, not so much 'the preferred synecdoche for adolescent boys', as Silver claims[144], but rather the love they have for each other[145], which is uncorrupted and therefore one which the persona is able to enjoy as a kind of vicarious experience. The only significant difference between this poem and Aschenbach's experience is that Cernuda's persona is rather more self-aware, which is why this vicarious experience is so valuable: he does not become obsessed with this kind of passion, but rather becomes destroyed emotionally by direct encounters[146].

These direct encounters illustrate first the captivating, consuming nature of passion, with which we have become so familiar in the work of Mann and Kafka. Interestingly, one of the poems where this aspect is clearest is poem IV of the later *Donde habite el olvido*, where Cernuda has greater detachment from the actual experience:

---

[141]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 144.

[142]Silver, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, p. 65.

[143]See above, p. 155.

[144]Silver, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, p. 66.

[145]The juxtaposition of 'en su amor, en su flor de universo' is enough to suggest this. The concept is also present elsewhere in the poetry of this time, for example 'Daytona': 'Alguien cortó la piedra en flor,' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 154). See also Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 37.

[146]Apparently the title refers to the title of a film 'White Shadows in the South Seas'. Soufas suggests, from knowledge of the film, that the white shadows are 'the white men who destroy the Paradise of the natives' ('Agents of Power', p. 71, note 25), arguing for 'the sterility of the adolescent ideal' (p. 71) and 'the adolescent's impotence to affirm a viable form of love' (Soufas, *Conflict of Light and Wind: The Spanish Generation of 1927 and the Ideology of Poetic Form* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), p. 145). If this were to be the case (and I am not at all convinced that the shadows are 'men', since they are 'de la vida ignorando', strongly suggesting a state of innocence), then it would confirm Cernuda's awareness that the pleasure is purely transient.

'Canté, subí,
Fui luz un día
Arrastrado en la llama.

Como un golpe de viento
Que deshace la sombra,
Caí en lo negro,
En el mundo insaciable.'[147]

The first lines here give full expression to the transition from adolescence to maturity, particularly vividly in the line 'Arrastrado en la llama': passion is a violent, consuming, destructive force which grips the lover and takes over his whole existence. The change is underlined by the words 'luz' in the second line of the first stanza quoted and 'llama' in the following line: the calm light of adolescent sexual awakening has become a flame which engulfs and destroys[148]. The result is swift and dramatic. Friedemann is gripped by a malevolent force, Aschenbach is overtaken by an illicit passion which destroys his self-control, the two K.'s are unable to resist their sexual drives, however far those drives drag them from their quests. The effect on Cernuda's persona is like a synthesis of all these: the desires are 'insaciable', as both K.'s find out, and the malevolent force of passion is so strong that it does not merely grip him, it flings him into the clutches of chaos.

In *Un río, un amor* and *Los placeres prohibidos*, the persona has let himself be swept away by the captivating power of love, and the effect has been disastrous, as can be seen in the poem 'Cuerpo en pena' from *Un río, un amor*, where the persona is imagined as a drowned man. This image of a 'life in death' conveys vividly the isolation and

---

[147]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 203-4.

[148]A similar idea is explored in 'Unos cuerpos son como flores', where 'el cuerpo sufre la quemadura' (Consuelo García-Devesa, 'Cuatro poemas de amor o un poema de Luis Cernuda a la luz de Bécquer, Rosalía y A. Machado', *Romance Notes*, 33 (1992), 203):

'Unos cuerpos son como flores,
Otros como puñales,
Otros como cintas de agua;
Pero todo, temprano o tarde,
Serán quemaduras que en otro cuerpo se agranden,
Convirtiendo por virtud del fuego a una piedra en un hombre.'

(Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 180.)

alienation which failed love has caused:

> 'Lentamente el ahogado recorre sus dominios
> Donde el silencio quita su apariencia a la vida.
> Transparentes llanuras inmóviles le ofrecen
> Árboles sin colores y pájaros callados.'[149]

There can be no question that life has lost all meaning for the persona. He can only roam about in a world which is like a desolate wilderness, portrayed particularly by the 'colourless trees and silent birds'. It is of particular interest to note that, while in adolescence the persona could take refuge in an enclosed garden, there is now no such place where the world of nature still offers its vitality: he is surrounded by a sense of emptiness and emotional extinction. This idea of extinction is developed in the last two stanzas of the poem:

> 'En plena mar al fin, sin rumbo, a toda vela;
> Hacia lo lejos, más, hacia la flor sin nombre.
> Atravesar ligero como pájaro herido
> Ese cristal confuso, esas luces extrañas.
>
> Pálido entre las ondas cada vez más opacas
> El ahogado ligero se pierde ciegamente
> En el fondo nocturno como un astro apagado.
> Hacia lo lejos, sí, hacia el aire sin nombre.'[150]

The last stanza especially suggests loss of personality, individuality, identity as a human being. The erotic experience has not just denied him satisfaction, it has robbed him of his existence. While the phrase 'se pierde ciegamente/En el fondo nocturno' undoubtedly reinforces the ideas of wandering lost in an almost 'Kafkaesque' labyrinth of despair where there is no hope of light, more crucial is that the comparison is made with 'un astro apagado': a star which has been 'apagado', i.e., one which has lost its light source, is not so much 'lost' as extinguished forever. It has effectively lost *its very being*. The persona's

---

[149]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 144.

[150]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 146.

loss of humanity is then reinforced by the repetition of the second line of the previous stanza, but with one important change, i.e., 'la flor' has been replaced by 'el aire'. Whereas 'la flor' stands for 'love'[151] and is therefore a hold on life, however tenuous, 'el aire' is much more imprecise and not in itself animate. The lover is thus forced from elemental passion merely to communion with two of the elements, air and water. This feature of loss of identity is not altogether dissimilar to that of 'Auflösung von Individualität' which has been discussed with reference to Kafka: Olga of *Das Schloß* loses through the erotic dance in the 'Herrenhof' something of her personality and individuality as a human being[152]. It was seen earlier[153] how close K. too comes to being 'aufgelöst', but what is more interesting here is the similarity of the *process*: K. 'verirrt[e] sich' and could only 'weiter sich verirren', even during the love-making scene. The persona of 'Cuerpo en pena' 'se pierde ciegamente', haunted by a hopeless desire which causes him to carry on 'hacia lo lejos, hacia el aire sin nombre'.

'En medio de la multitud', from *Los placeres prohibidos*, is a much more severe indictment of the erotic experience, and is the culmination in extreme form of the themes of chaos, isolation and non-being. I quote the poem in its entirety:

> 'En medio de la multitud le vi pasar, con sus ojos tan rubios como la cabellera. Marchaba abriendo el aire y los cuerpos; una mujer se arrodilló a su paso. Yo sentí cómo la sangre desertaba mis venas gota a gota.
>
> Vacío, anduve sin rumbo por la ciudad. Gentes extrañas pasaban a mi lado sin verme. Un cuerpo se derritió con leve susurro al tropezarme. Anduve más y más.
>
> No sentía mis pies. Quise cogerlos en mi mano, y no hallé mis manos; quise gritar, y no hallé mi voz. La niebla me envolvía.
>
> Me pesaba la vida como un remordimiento; quise arrojarla de mí. Mas era imposible, porque estaba muerto y andaba entre los muertos.'[154]

---

[151]It seems reasonable to assume that the 'flower' refers again to the 'flower of desire' (Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 37). See also above, p. 187.

[152]See above, p. 175.

[153]See above, p. 177.

[154]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 176-7.

This is a powerful expression of emotional catastrophe[155]. The mental turmoil caused by failed love is such that the persona's entire being disintegrates. The sight of the beloved at the beginning of the poem is enough to cause the blood, symbol of life itself, to drain from the persona's veins. The persona's life has no direction, no purpose, no *life* whatsoever: his existence is no longer tangible even to himself[156]. The parts of his body become a collection of lifeless objects with which he cannot make contact; his voice, the principal physical means of interpersonal communication, remains silent. The gloomy atmosphere is enhanced by the mist, which tends to be associated with an eerie quiet, reinforcing his own inability to speak. The poem is then concluded with the despairing comment that the persona is condemned to carry on living this non-life. The atmosphere of death in the last part is also emphasised by the alliteration of the 'm' sound: 'me' is linked phonologically with 're<u>m</u>ordi<u>m</u>iento', the negative conjunction 'mas', 'i<u>m</u>posible' and, finally, 'muerto', repeated in the strong position as the last word of the poem. The chaos is echoed further in the form of the poem. Structurally, with two longer verse paragraphs followed by two shorter verse paragraphs, it is like a 'deformed sonnet'[157]: it is almost as if the chaos of the experience cannot be contained in a conventional metrical form[158]. The indictment of 'love' as loss of identity is therefore far more serious than in Kafka. Kafka reveals it as a temporary problem within the framework of existential, ontological questions. For Cernuda, it is foregrounded as one of the major ontological problems.

Egocentrism in a 'love' relationship is another central issue. The egocentrism is, at least in part, a consequence of the decline from order into chaos: individuals have become isolated and alienated and as a result unable to form meaningful relationships.

---

[155]See also James Valender, '*Los placeres prohibidos*: An Analysis of the Prose Poems', in *The Word and the Mirror*, ed. Jiménez-Fajardo, p. 84.

[156]The idea of an 'hombre vacío' was not uncommon in poetry of the time, present also, for example, in Rafael Alberti's *Sobre los ángeles* and T. S. Eliot's *The Hollow Men*. See Francisco Ruiz Soriano, 'Ejemplos coincidentes de los tópicos de "la ciudad estéril" y "los hombres vacíos" en T. S. Eliot, Luis Cernuda y Rafael Alberti', *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 18 (1993), 298 & 303-4.

[157]I am indebted to Professor D. G. Walters for this suggestion.

[158]Poems in *Un río, un amor* and *Los placeres prohibidos* are often 'almost' regular with a series of regular stanzas followed by, for example, a single line. See 'Duerme, muchacho', *Poesía completa*, p. 162, although other poems (such as 'Decidme anoche') are much more regular in their versification.

This then becomes expressed in amatory experiences as a selfishness and disregard for the partner which, not surprisingly, leads to disaster. This theme comes to the fore in 'Telarañas cuelgan de la razón' from *Los placeres prohibidos*. The poem begins with a statement of love's passing:

> 'Telarañas cuelgan de la razón
> En un paisaje de ceniza absorta;
> Ha pasado el huracán de amor,
> Ya ningún pájaro queda.'[159]

The last two lines of this stanza are clear: the violence of love is past, leaving emptiness and desolation. This clarifies the second line, suggesting sadness and death. 'Ceniza' may suggest the consequence of the 'fire' of passion, that is, the dead ashes after the flames have died away (although with a Surrealist mixture of images 'amor' in this poem is an 'huracán'). This only leaves the opening line/title, which seems to have genuine Surrealist disregard for logic and unity of theme. Perhaps this line is suggesting something of the physicality of the affair and the lack of spirituality. Since 'cobwebs' are normally associated with staleness, mustiness and sterility, perhaps this is an indication of an eroticism on which reason has had no effect. Whatever the imagery behind this line, the general tone of the poem becomes clear as it continues later in the second stanza:

> 'Porque alguien, cruel como un día de sol en primavera,
> Con su sola presencia ha dividido en dos un cuerpo.'[160]

This reveals the reason why the 'huracán de amor' has passed. The two lovers had become united as one body, but the selfish nature of one caused the joy of union to turn to tragedy. It is not clear whether the 'alguien' is the beloved himself or a third party who took the beloved away, but in either case the love was not selfless enough to be faithful. This idea is stated even more explicitly in 'Estaba tendido', also from this collection:

> 'Estaba tendido y tenía entre mis brazos un cuerpo como seda. Lo

---

[159]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 175.

[160]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 175.

besé en los labios, porque el río pasaba por debajo. Entonces se burló de mi amor.'[161]

This opening description of love-making is brought to an abrupt close by the stark comment 'se burló de mi amor': the love-making has turned into nothing more than crass physicality and an excuse for a bitter taunt of the persona. The rest of the poem then speaks of pain and rejection. This sort of callousness and selfishness has already been observed in Kafka and to a lesser extent in Mann: Gerda von Rinnlingen is proud, and happy coldly to reject the advances of Johannes Friedemann. In Kafka, both Josef K. and K. are egocentric in their relationships with women: they seek sexual gratification and then cast their victims aside. It is part of the tragedy of love in a world of chaos, and a tragedy in which Cernuda and his personae are, like Frieda and Friedemann, the victims.

Cernuda's attitudes towards love go through various stages of development after this, especially from *Invocaciones* to *Como quien espera el alba*. This has been analysed well by Harris[162]. At the risk of repeating Harris' arguments in places, it is worthwhile focussing on some of the crucial points in the development, in order that the similarities with Mann and Kafka might be explored. It would seem logical that such a disastrous experience of love would lead the personae of Cernuda's poetry, like K. in *Das Schloß*[163], to abandon amatory commitment. This happens in the second poem of *Invocaciones*, 'Soliloquio del farero'. The choice of a lighthouse-keeper, if perhaps a little unimaginative, is a convenient one in which to extol the virtues of an entirely hermetic existence:

'Cómo llenarte, soledad,
Sino contigo misma.

De niño, entre las pobres guaridas de la tierra,
Quieto en ángulo oscuro,
Buscaba en ti, encendida guirnalda,
Mis auroras futuras y furtivos nocturnos,

---

[161]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 179.

[162]Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, especially chapters II and V.

[163]See above, p. 177.

Y en ti los vislumbraba,'[164]

This poem forms something of a hymn in praise of being alone. Solitude is identified as the source of peace and harmony while the persona was a child: pre-adolescent innocence is always regarded with favour in Cernuda's work, as the time before the reality of eroticism shattered that harmony. Much of the poem is written in an elegiac tone which laments the persona's problems. The penultimate stanza is of significance:

'Tú, verdad solitaria,
Transparente pasión, mi soledad de siempre,
Eres inmenso abrazo;
El sol, el mar,
La oscuridad, la estepa,
El hombre y su deseo,
La airada muchedumbre,
¿Qué son sino tú misma?'[165]

Passion and desire, which were once declared as the purpose of his existence[166], seem to have been subsumed under the heading of 'soledad': solitude appears to be a higher concept where the trials caused by failed desire disappear and life is blissfully peaceful. While it would be somewhat tenuous to suggest that the attitude to and experience of solitude are similar to that depicted in Kafka's novels, nevertheless the motivation for seeking it bears much in common with the Czech author: an experience of love which is an encounter with chaos and the destruction of his personality and identity.

The desire for solitude quickly develops into a narcissistic, egocentric hedonism, where there is a concern with a kind of sterile desire which does not reach out to make contact with another but continually returns to its own obsessive self-interest. Particularly significant in this regard is '*Dans ma péniche*', also in *Invocaciones*:

'Quiero vivir cuando el amor muere;

---

[164]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 223.

[165]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 225.

[166]'Vivo un solo deseo,' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 112).

Muere, muere pronto, amor mío.
Abre como una cola la victoria purpúrea del deseo,
Aunque el amante se crea sepultado en un súbito otoño,'[167]

This represents another reorientation of Cernuda's ideas. The interest in interpersonal love resulted in disaster, but solitude *per se* is not an answer either, for while Kafka genuinely wanted to avoid emotional, and especially sexual, contact, Cernuda continues to believe that his sensual inclinations cannot be without value. The result is a reappraisal, and the identification of two different concepts: 'deseo' and 'amor'. 'Amor', i.e., love *between* people, is exhorted to perish itself, because it is now implicated as the cause of the earlier distress, while 'deseo' is now seen as an elemental force in its own right and thus not subject to the problems of 'amor'[168]. The last part of the poem is the climax:

'Cuánto vale una noche como ésta, indecisa entre la primavera última y el
estío primero,
Este instante en que oigo los leves chasquidos del bosque nocturno,
Conforme conmigo mismo y con la indiferencia de los otros,
Solo yo con mi vida,
Con mi parte en el mundo.

Jóvenes sátiros,
Que vivís en la selva, labios risueños ante el exangüe dios cristiano,
A quien el comerciante adora para mejor cobrar su mercancía,
Pies de jóvenes sátiros,
Danzad más presto cuando el amante llora,
Mientras lanza su tierna endecha
De: «Ah, cuando el amor muere».
Porque oscura y cruel la libertad entonces ha nacido;
Vuestra descuidada alegría sabrá fortalecerla,
Y el deseo girará locamente en pos de los hermosos cuerpos
Que vivifican el mundo un solo instante.'[169]

There is a sense of exhilaration in the enjoyment of sensual pleasure for its own sake, and

---

[167]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 234.

[168]See also Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, pp. 50-1, for a discussion of this concept of desire.

[169]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 236.

this focus on 'deseo' does indeed seem to lead to 'communion with the natural world'[170]. The persona here is very defiant and confident of his own importance and of the insignificance of other people for his satisfaction, suggested by 'Conforme conmigo mismo y con la indiferencia de los otros,/Solo yo con mi vida'. This is perhaps one of the clearest examples of an entirely egocentric erotic involvement, for no-one else matters. We feel the persona would have had considerable sympathy for Aschenbach's attitude '... daß der Liebende göttlicher sei als der Geliebte'[171]. Aschenbach uses his (mis-)reading of Plato to persuade himself of the value of sterile, egocentric, erotic obsession where the main interest is in sensuality for its own sake. (This is evidenced further by his occasional erotic rêveries.) These are attitudes to desire which are reflected strongly in '*Dans ma péniche*', itself an expression of Cernuda's tendency to indulge in rêveries. The similarity continues in the final stanza with the reference to the 'jóvenes sátiros', who were 'attendants of the god Dionysus, boisterous creatures of the woods and hills'[172]. Their affinity with the natural world is brought out in the physical setting, but the fact that they were attendants of Dionysus is very revealing. Dionysus was the 'god of wine and of ecstasy'[173] and as such the ideal focus for a hedonistic poem glorifying pagan sensuality. Such a focus is totally opposed to restraint and control. This primeval passion is then juxtaposed with its opposite, i.e., civilisation, represented by 'mercancía' and the blasphemous 'el exangüe dios cristiano'. The choice of the word 'exangüe' strikes at the very heart of Christian symbolism, based on the blood sacrifice for eternal salvation. Here the indication seems to be that the spilling of Christ's blood only resulted in a loss of vitality. This poem therefore comes very close to the chaotic Dionysian passion to which Aschenbach himself succumbs. There is however a subtle difference. Aschenbach's tragedy is rooted in his lack of self-awareness, but the persona here is not so deluded. The note of doubt is sounded in the last two lines of the poem: 'desire' will seek 'los hermosos cuerpos', which in itself suggests the risk of the hopelessness of interpersonal relationships. It is however the final line which makes it clear that it is 'wishful

---

[170]Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 122.

[171]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 607. See also above, p. 161.

[172]Howatson and Chilvers, p. 483.

[173]Howatson and Chilvers, p. 183.

thinking'[174], because the bodies only have an effect for 'un solo instante'. The poem expresses a surrender to 'deseo', but it is a joy which cannot last[175].

There is still a further concept to be discussed which is present in Mann's work, and hinted at in *Das Schloß*, namely the idea of the lover reaching towards a new freedom in a Romantic 'Liebestod'. It was seen how this is not an apotheosis but a disaster for both Aschenbach and Friedemann and no more than a dream for Frieda. Returning to *Los placeres prohibidos*, this sort of idea is seen in the short poem 'Te quiero'. Much of the poem is a simple, sincere declaration of love:

'Te quiero.

Te lo he dicho con el viento,
Jugueteando como animalillo en la arena
O iracundo como órgano tempestuoso;'[176]

Each stanza focusses on a feature of the natural world, using each of them as a metaphor for the range and intensity of feelings. Here the wind symbolises playfulness and innocent joy, but also violent, elemental passion. The poem culminates in the last two stanzas:

'Te lo he dicho con el miedo,
Te lo he dicho con la alegría,
Con el hastío, con las terribles palabras.

Pero así no me basta:
Más allá de la vida,
Quiero decírtelo con la muerte;
Más allá del amor,

---

[174]Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 123.

[175]A similar poem is 'El joven marino' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 236-42), in which the sailor desires a hedonistic union, not with another person, but with the elemental force of the sea. Such a union is still no substitute for an interpersonal relationship:

'Tuyo sólo en los ojos no te bastaba' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 237).

Bruton comments: 'His relationship to the sea is that of a slave to his master, a passive attitude which cannot satisfy the sailor's yearning for a close, physical embrace' ('"El joven marino": a Landmark in Cernuda's Poetic Development', *Quinquereme*, 4, No. 1, (1981), 89).

[176]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 191.

Quiero decírtelo con el olvido.'[177]

The closing stanza articulates the desire to give ultimate expression to love by seeking to achieve some kind of permanence and everlasting significance in the union of the lovers, to achieve an eternal and ultimate consummation. It is another expression of the 'Liebestod' which we saw the characters of Friedemann and Äschenbach as *believing* to be applicable to their own deaths but which is tragically not the case. Is 'Te quiero' then a true Romantic apotheosis? There are two things which challenge this interpretation: first, it is expressed as 'Quiero decírtelo'. This conveys desire, certainly, and intention, possibly, but not actuality: it is the way the persona would *like* things to be. The second point which has not yet been mentioned is the first of the two stanzas quoted above. The stanza speaks of 'alegría', presumably the persona's when he was in love, but also of 'miedo', 'hastío' and 'terribles palabras'. Given the context of *Los placeres prohibidos*, it must seem likely that these emotions relate to the pain of rejection and disappointment, which lends a poignancy to the desire of the final stanza, given the sad reality that, if the persona were to die, it would never be the consummation of love, but an appreciation of its disaster. Again, what sets the poem apart from Aschenbach is the persona's awareness of the unreality of his aspirations.

It is now appropriate to turn to a brief consideration of the other significant amatory encounter, expressed in 'Poemas para un cuerpo' in *Con las horas contadas*. It takes us away both from direct comparison with Mann and Kafka and, indeed, from the work of Cernuda which we have analysed so far, for this poem cycle relates a pleasurable experience. The following, from poem X, 'Contigo', is typical of this cycle:

'¿Mi tierra?
Mi tierra eres tú.

¿Mi gente?
Mi gente eres tú.

El destierro y la muerte

---

[177]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 192.

Para mí están adonde
No estés tú.

¿Y mi vida?
Dime, mi vida,
¿Qué es, si no eres tú?'[178]

The poem is an expression of unadulterated happiness, of an amatory encounter as it ought to be, although perhaps it is poetically not Cernuda's best: the concepts in this poem are somewhat trite and unoriginal, and there is little profundity. The sentiment is nevertheless entirely sincere, and a good example of the difference between this love affair and the earlier disaster[179]. This poem cycle would thus seem to be a final refutation of the earlier poetry where the experience of love led to chaos. There is however a discordant note sounded in poem XII, 'La vida', where the beloved is compared to the sun:

'Pero también tú te pones
Lo mismo que el sol, y crecen
En torno mío las sombras
De soledad, vejez, muerte.'[180]

The experience of love has been joyful, it is true, but it is still subject to the passing of time, and it must come to an end. Once it is over (if, indeed, it is not over already), the indication of these lines is that sadness and loneliness will once again be part of the persona's existence: there is still expressed even here the threat, if not the actual presence, of the resurgence of chaos and catastrophe. Even at its best, the experience of

---

[178]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 478. This poem is reminiscent of Bécquer's 'Rima' XXI:

'¿Qué es poesía? dices mientras clavas
en mi pupila tu pupila azul.
¿Qué es poesía? ¿Y tú me lo preguntas?
Poesía... eres tú!'

(Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, *Rimas*, ed. José Luis Cano (Madrid: Cátedra, 1983), p. 61.)

[179]Valender makes the further valid comment that Cernuda is once again using 'yo' for himself rather than 'tú' in poems such as 'El intruso' (see above, p. 78ff, demonstrating that he is 'más seguro de quién [es]' ('Cernuda y sus "Poemas para un cuerpo"', *Revista de la Universidad de México*, 38, No. 15 (1982), 37).

[180]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 481.

'love' can always lead to chaos.

The Purpose of 'Love'

By the time of writing *Donde habite el olvido* a greater degree of detachment has entered Cernuda's poetry, allowing him to concentrate on what went wrong with 'love' and why. It is this greater detachment which permits the personae of the later poetry, and most notably of *Donde habite el olvido* and *Como quien espera el alba*, to explore the purpose of 'love'.

Like Aschenbach, Cernuda's personae see a directly spiritual, transcendental side to 'love'; like K., they see 'love' as a means to an end. *Donde habite el olvido*[181] in particular makes it clear, first, that the disastrous experience of 'love' is the exact converse of the goal, and second, that the goal is not to be abandoned as a result of the disaster. The original aim for 'love' is explored in the first stanza of poem II of this fifth collection:

'Como una vela sobre el mar
Resume ese azulado afán que se levanta
Hasta las estrellas futuras,
Hecho escala de olas
Por donde pies divinos descienden al abismo,
También tu forma misma,
Ángel, demonio, sueño de un amor soñado,
Resumen en mí un afán que en otro tiempo levantaba
Hasta las nubes sus olas melancólicas.'[182]

This is a difficult poem. The most important aspect is established in line two, namely 'ese azulado afán', foregrounding the concept of the more elemental force of desire as

---

[181]The title *Donde habite el olvido* is a line taken from poem LXVI of Bécquer's *Rimas* (p. 85):

'En donde esté una piedra solitaria
sin inscripción alguna,
donde habite el olvido,
allí estará mi tumba.'

It is precisely this sense of desolation and non-existence which sets the mood for this stage of the development of Cernuda's poetry.

[182]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 202.

opposed to personal love, on account of which he has sought a kind of refuge 'donde habite el olvido'. The choice of 'azulado' to describe 'afán' is not an obvious one; this links it with the 'mar' of line one and the 'olas' of line four, and the coldness frequently associated with the colour blue may well reinforce the sense of desolation in which the poet finds himself. Blue however is also the colour of the sky and so the 'afán' is not only linked back to the 'mar' of the previous line but also forward to the realms of the 'estrellas' of the following line, thus in the first four lines of the poem binding closely together the two regions with which the second part of the stanza then deals in greater detail. These lines are also reminiscent of Platonic philosophy, with the references to 'escala' and to 'estrellas futuras' in particular suggesting the continual progression upwards of the true Platonic lover[183]. The following lines however also indicate something of an opposite process, that is, of the descent of the gods to the earthly realms. This introduces the concept of the 'daimon', which was also an element of ancient Greek philosophy. Eros was identified in Platonic philosophy as a 'daimon', which was a being which was 'half-god and half-man'[184]. As Soufas comments, 'Acting in the capacity of an intermediary and not as a god in the Platonic system, love thus facilitates access by mortals to a more intense, almost divine reality'[185]. The reference to 'Ángel, demonio' in this stanza clearly alludes to this dual, 'daimonic' character of 'love', and the yearning, therefore, is, like Aschenbach's initially, the desire for 'love' to help reveal a vision of eternal order, although Eros' approach to this modern fallen world could imply contact with destructive 'amor'. There is however even in these lines an echo of the empty world Kafka's lovers inhabit: K. hopes that his erotic involvements will bring him closer to the castle, but just as this 'love' is more of a parody of the Platonic ideal, so too Cernuda undermines the ability of this philosophy to apply in the modern world: '... afán que en *otro tiempo* levantaba/Hasta las nubes.' This is an aim for love to which the modern man no longer has access.

---

[183]'This is the right way of approaching or being initiated into the mysteries of love, to begin with examples of beauty in this world, and using them as steps to ascend continually with that absolute beauty as one's aim,' (Plato, *The Symposium*, p. 94).

[184]Plato, *The Symposium*, p. 81.

[185]Soufas, 'Cernuda and Daimonic Power', *Hispania*, 66 (1983), 168.

Another poem which deals with the transcendental aim for 'love', and in which there is once again a sense that the goal is now unattainable, is poem X of *Donde habite el olvido*. The poem has an elegiac tone, and focusses initially on what man has lost through the experience of 'love':

'Bajo el anochecer inmenso,
Bajo la lluvia desatada, iba
Como un ángel que arrojan
De aquel edén nativo.'[186]

These lines remind us of the disaster which resulted from the loss of innocence. While the reference is to Eden, there is no Judeo-Christian significance, but rather a pagan one, with clear Platonic echoes:

'Lo que en la luz fue impulso, las alas,
Antes candor erguido,
A la espalda pesaban sordamente.'[187]

According to Plato, 'The soul before birth ... was acquainted with the world of Ideas'[188]. It must surely be to this state that these lines refer, especially given the references to 'wings' and the realm of 'light'[189]. This ties Cernuda's thinking even closer to the Platonic world than either Kafka or Mann, and the goal is thus quite explicitly to regain an understanding of transcendent order. This is seen conclusively in the closing lines of the poem:

'Fuerza joven quisieras para alzar nuevamente,
Con fango, lágrimas, odio, injusticia,
La imagen del amor hasta el cielo,
La imagen del amor en la luz pura.'[190]

---

[186]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 208.

[187]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 208.

[188]Howatson and Chilvers, p. 429. See also above, p. 58.

[189]See also Curry, 'Between Platonism and Modernity', p. 125.

[190]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 209.

While the emphasis is on the importance of regaining the sense of order, the phrase 'Fuerza joven', which should be the principal means to achieve that end, is ambiguous. Considering the reference at the beginning of the poem to the 'edén nativo', this could refer to personal rejuvenation, a regaining of the state of sexual innocence. There is however another possibility, which brings us back in line with Platonic theory and with the stance of Aschenbach: the 'Fuerza joven' is not his own self rejuvenated but the young life of another, and the love which the persona would feel would then guide him once more to a sense of order and harmony.

In both Mann and Kafka there is a tendency to attempt to find meaning, not in the general, transcendental sense, but on the individual, sensual, worldly level[191]. Interestingly, this is incorporated also into *Donde habite el olvido*, even into the second stanza of the second poem, which is apparently so laden with metaphysical import:

'Sintiendo todavía los pulsos de ese afán,
Yo, el más enamorado,
En las orillas del amor,
Sin que una luz me vea
Definitivamente muerto o vivo,
Contemplo sus olas y quisiera anegarme,
Deseando perdidamente
Descender, como los ángeles aquellos por la escala de espuma,
Hasta el fondo del mismo amor que ningún hombre ha visto.'[192]

Where in the first stanza there is an 'escala de olas' and the 'olas' of the 'afán' are supposed to rise 'hasta las nubes', now the poet wishes to 'anegar[se]' and 'descender ... hasta el fondo del mismo amor'. In a previous Platonic age of order and harmony man could rise to the heights of spiritual fulfilment, but now the persona is much more concerned with indulging himself in sensual desire. While this puts us in mind of the Romantic 'Liebestod' of such poems as 'Te quiero'[193], there is nevertheless here not so much a desire for an ultimate consummation but an interest rather in the 'amor' *per se*.

---

[191]See above, pp. 167 & 182.

[192]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 202.

[193]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 191-2. See also above, p. 197f.

The goal therefore cannot be entirely metaphysical or transcendental, but also intermingled with a desire for erotic fulfilment. The complexity of this attitude towards love's purpose is evidenced not only by the ambivalence in this poem, but also by the fact that the tenth poem is profoundly metaphysical[194].

Since *Donde habite el olvido* was written in response to a disastrous experience of love, it is clear from the beginning that the quest for order in 'love' has been a failure. The poetry does not express so much how 'love' can lead the lover to the 'estrellas futuras' of poem II, but instead is more concerned with the way in which it went wrong and the resulting anguish. Love is thwarted, as is the case with Kafka and Mann, by the interference of an overwhelming erotic experience, preventing any possibility of rising above the purely physical. A difference which should however be observed between the poetry of *Donde habite el olvido* and the prose of *Der Tod in Venedig* and *Das Schloß* is that in the latter two works, by their very nature as stories, it is much easier to trace a progression of events and changes in attitudes, whereas Cernuda's poetry selects different aspects of the experience and presents them in individual poems, resulting in a collection where the possibility of a straight-line progression really does not exist. We have already seen how poem IV is an expression of the violence of passion[195]. A calmer evaluation of what goes wrong is to be seen in poem III:

'Esperé un dios en mis días
Para crear mi vida a su imagen,
Mas el amor, como un agua,
Arrastra afanes al paso.

Me he olvidado a mí mismo en sus ondas;
Vacío el cuerpo, doy contra las luces;

---

[194]See above, p. 203.

[195]'Como un golpe de viento
Que deshace la sombra,
Caí en lo negro,
En el mundo insaciable.' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 204.)
It is clearly the overwhelmingly violent nature of this passion which is the root cause of the disaster. Like the protagonists of *Das Schloß*, sensuality and physicality interfere so quickly and so powerfully that the persona is quite unable even to contemplate higher values. Like Aschenbach, he cannot extricate himself.

Vivo y no vivo, muerto y no muerto;
Ni tierra ni cielo, ni cuerpo ni espíritu.

Soy eco de algo;'[196]

The first two lines of this poem are a reiteration of the potential transcendental power of 'love'. It is however perhaps this very identification of 'love' as 'un dios' in itself that is the persona's mistake: 'love' is not a god but that powerful, malevolent force which 'arrastra afanes al paso'. What is most important about the persona of this poem is that he is tragically aware of the chaos which underlies the love force. Thus, while he is emotionally destroyed by the experience, he does not accept Aschenbach's or Friedemann's escape route of a parody of a Romantic 'Liebestod' but is condemned to the half-life of 'Vivo y no vivo, muerto y no muerto'[197]. Thus in poem VIII, having had the disaster expressed in emotional terms, it is now expressed in metaphysical terms:

'Ya no es vida ni muerte
El tormento sin nombre,
Es un mundo caído
Donde silba la ira.

Es un mar delirante,
Clamor de todo espacio,
Voz que de sí levanta
Las alas de un dios póstumo.'[198]

As mentioned above, this poem works on two levels. On the one hand, the world has lost contact with the Absolute and lacks all direction[199]. On the other hand, 'love' has completely failed. Like K. and Aschenbach, the persona is defeated in his quest. The difference however lies in this: while it is clear to the reader that K. achieves nothing in his relationships with women, he carries on nevertheless. 'Love' achieves nothing in

---

[196]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 202-3.

[197]This line is very reminiscent of San Juan de la Cruz's 'Vivo sin vivir en mí' (*Poesía*, ed. Domingo Ynduráin, 4th ed. (Madrid: Cátedra, 1988), pp. 267-9). The contrast with the mystic poet however only underlines Cernuda's failure to rise above the purely physical world.

[198]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 207.

[199]See above, p. 73.

Kafka, and the lines 'Es un mundo caído/Donde silba la ira' would describe very well Kafka's fictional world. In this poem however there are no such delusions, neither is there a pretence that Platonic philosophy might still apply, as in Aschenbach's case. The closing line above is in fact a tragic ironic comment on the Platonic-type ideal for 'love': the wings of the soul are now powerless, and the god is 'póstumo'.

This tragedy, however, is not the definitive statement of the purpose of 'love' in Cernuda's poetry. In *Der Tod in Venedig*, the failure is expressed irrevocably in Aschenbach's death. In *Das Schloß*, the erotic encounters are just one more 'dead end' in the quest to enter the castle. Cernuda, however, does not give up. When he comes to write the later poetry of *Como quien espera el alba*, the earlier disaster can be viewed much more calmly, and he experiences a new freedom to meditate upon love. The result is poetry which gives a new expression to the search for order in 'love' which develops beyond the definitive failure in Mann and Kafka. A particularly interesting poem from this eighth collection is 'Urania', which is strikingly different from the chaos and despair of the earlier poetry[200]:

'Es el bosque de plátanos, los troncos altos, lisos,
Como columnas blancas pautando el horizonte
Que el sol de mediodía asiste y dora,
Al pie del agua clara, a cuyo margen
Alientan dulcemente violetas esquivas.

Ella está inmóvil. Cubre aéreo
El ropaje azulado su hermosura virgen;'[201]

All is peace and calm in this idyllic landscape, and there is a sense of harmony and order[202]. Urania, one of the nine Muses of Greek mythology, is 'inmóvil', which links her

---

[200]It is also different in its treatment of the love theme from the poems of 'Poemas para un cuerpo' from *Con las horas contadas* studied above (p. 198ff), which describe a happy love affair.

[201]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 328.

[202]This sense of harmony stands in contrast to the 'Égloga' of *Égloga, Elegía, Oda*, where the idyll is subverted by the closing lines:

'El cielo ya no canta,
Ni su celeste eternidad asiste

figure to the 'troncos altos' of the first stanza and thus conveys to the reader how she is integrated into this landscape. (This sense of integration contrasts with *Primeras Poesías*, where the persona was separate from life. Moreover, the time when the persona felt most 'at home' in a natural environment was in the enclosed atmosphere of the hidden garden, not in an open, idyllic, pastoral landscape.) Another striking feature of Urania is the reference to her 'hermosura virgen'. Collections III, IV and V of *La Realidad y el Deseo* are laden with references to the devastating effects of physical love, whereas now the stress is on a wholly spiritual dimension. In addition, the name Urania was the 'title of the goddess Aphrodite, describing her as 'heavenly'[203]. The poem abounds with images of order, culminating in the appearance of the persona in the final stanza:

> 'Si en otros días di curso enajenado
> A la pasión inútil, su llanto largo y fiebre,
> Hoy busco tu sagrado, tu amor,'[204]

The goal of order through 'love' appears finally to have been achieved. Passion and lust are now recognised as 'inútil', replaced by the heavenly order and transcendence of the Greek mythological world. Temporally separate from 'pasión inútil', the persona is now able to meditate in such a way that he can attain what appeared to be irrevocably lost in *Donde habite el olvido.* What is no more than illusion for Aschenbach and not even a distant hope for K. has become reality for Cernuda's persona.

This successful search for order is developed further, in the closing poem of *Como quien espera el alba*, 'Vereda del cuco'. The opening stanzas of this long poem are an examination of Cernuda's 'relationship with desire since the time of his adolescence'[205]. Unlike 'Urania', however, in the later stanzas the physical experience of 'love' is accepted as a valuable stage in the process of attaining this new-found order. It is

---

> A la luz y a las rosas,
> Sino al horror nocturno de las cosas.'

(Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 132.)

[203]Howatson and Chilvers, p. 560. See also Silver, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, p. 123, and p. 126, note 25.

[204]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 329.

[205]Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 125.

however the love *force* which is paramount, *not* individual experiences, as is stated in the final line of the fourth stanza, 'Que el amor es lo eterno y no lo amado'. Bearing this in mind, let us consider the following from the fifth stanza:

'Es el amor fuente de todo;
Hay júbilo en la luz porque brilla esa fuente,
Encierra al dios la espiga porque mana esa fuente,
Voz pura es la palabra porque suena esa fuente,
Y la muerte es de ella el fondo codiciable.
Extático en su orilla,
Oh tormento divino,
Oh divino deleite,
Bebías de tu sed y de la fuente a un tiempo,
Sabiendo a eternidad tu sed y el agua.'[206]

Cernuda is once more using the term 'amor' rather than 'deseo': '"amor" has become again a means of attaining that mystic state of the *acorde* where the visible and invisible realities are fused'[207]. This mystic element is underlined by the exultant exclamations which echo the language of San Juan de la Cruz[208], and order has been found and experienced in a way which was never open to Mann's or Kafka's protagonists[209]. As far

---

[206]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 377.

[207]Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 127.

[208]See Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 127, Silver, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, p. 115, and Jiménez-Fajardo, *Luis Cernuda*, p. 94.

[209]The extent to which order has been found is perhaps underlined by the way in which the exultant language is also similar to the poetry of Jorge Guillén, whose collection *Cántico* is an expression of his 'Fe de vida'. For example the third section of the long poem 'Salvación de la primavera' is as follows:

'Presa en tu exactitud,
Inmóvil regalándote,
A un poder te sometes,
Férvido, que me invade.

¡Amor! Ni tú ni yo,
Nosotros, y por él
Todas las maravillas
En que el ser llega a ser.

Se colma el apogeo
Máximo de la tierra.
Aquí está: la verdad

as the *experience* of 'love' is concerned, we should however be careful not to be misled: it is a calm acceptance of the value of having experienced 'love' despite its chaos. This poem is *not* an indication that the persona has found order at *first* hand in erotic experiences *per se*, but in contemplation of them at *second* hand. This concept is developed in the following stanza:

> 'Que si el cuerpo de un día
> Es ceniza de siempre,
> Sin ceniza no hay llama,
> Ni sin muerte es el cuerpo
> Testigo del amor, fe del amor eterno,
> Razón del mundo que rige las estrellas.'[210]

It is now explicitly stated that the chaotic experience of 'love' was necessary so that this new vision might be attained. 'Love' is now identified as the necessary death before the 'rebirth' into a new perception and understanding of it. 'Love' has thus been transformed by the persona's meditation from the source of chaos to the source of order, and the life of the persona has consequently been transformed by it. But we should not stop here. 'Vereda del cuco' is not exclusively about 'order'. It finds order, certainly, but this involves *all the chaos* which has gone before. The poem is an *interweaving* of the basic dichotomy of order and chaos.

The joy of this insight does not however last, perhaps for the very reason that it

---

Se revela y nos crea.

> ¡Oh realidad, por fin
> Real, en aparición!
> ¿Qué universo me nace
> Sin velar a su dios?
>
> Pesa, pesa en mis brazos,
> Alma, fiel a un volumen.
> Dobla con abandono,
> Alma, tu pesadumbre.'

(*Cántico*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1984), p. 96). There is however the fundamental difference in Guillén's poetry that this is a physical experience.

[210]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 378.

was successful, namely because it is contemplation and not life itself. The poem 'El retraído', from *Vivir sin estar viviendo*, deals, not specifically with love, but rather with memories and the value of the inner life as opposed to external reality. The greater part of the poem adopts a positive stance towards memories[211]. The closing stanza does however contradict this apparent idyll:

> 'Si morir fuera esto,
> Un recordar tranquilo de la vida,
> Un contemplar sereno de las cosas,
> Cuán dichosa la muerte,
> Rescatando el pasado
> Para soñarlo a solas cuando libre,
> Para pensarlo tal presente eterno,
> Como si un pensamiento valiese más que el mundo.'[212]

The opening lines of this stanza certainly convey an idealised vision of the values of contemplation. The validity of this is however thrown into question by the final line 'Como si un pensamiento valiese más que el mundo'. Silver's interpretation of this poem remarkably suggests that this line supports the stance of the rest of the poem, but in so doing he is ignoring the grammar of it, namely the subjunctive after 'como si'[213]. The persona is *aware* that this is wishful thinking, and that reality does not conform to this ideal. Thus while the poetry of this later period is certainly much more serene than the earlier poetry and the greater interest in inner reality has helped the persona to remain rather closer to order than to chaos, nevertheless it is evident that such a solution is an evasion and does not represent the definitive attainment of transcendent order and harmony[214].

---

[211]See Silver, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, p. 74.

[212]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 400.

[213]'Supreme among the attributes of memory is that of experiencing any fragment of the past as eternal present, possible because a thought ... *is* worth more than the world.' [My emphasis] (Silver, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, p. 75.) In 'Río vespertino' in *Como quien espera el alba* there is the same idea expressed in the form of a *real* condition:

> '¿... Si sólo un pensamiento vale el mundo?' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 372).

The reappraisal in 'El retraído' is surely very significant.

[214]Bruton comments on another poem 'El fuego' from *Vivir sin estar viviendo* that 'Cernuda is unable to maintain his faith in reality and must make do with its metamorphosis into memory' ('Luis Cernuda and the

This degree of ambivalence is very important in Cernuda's love poetry. The critical literature has tended to concentrate on the contrast between the chaos of the experience of 'love' and the order of the meditation on 'love' in poems such as 'Vereda del cuco' and 'Urania'. But, as already mentioned, even in 'Vereda del cuco' there is an interweaving of both order and chaos. This idea of interweaving of order and chaos encourages us to re-evaluate such a firm distinction. In '*Dans ma péniche*', for example, we have already analysed the elements of chaos, but is there anything related to order? It is without question the first major step towards the profoundly meditative poetry of *Como quien espera el alba*, since it depicts the persona's withdrawal into himself and his divorcing himself from the external world and its chaos. This is established as early as the first line, 'Quiero vivir cuando el amor muere'[215], and runs as a thread throughout the poem. There is a deep-rooted desire for order *and* an active search for it. The fact that the erotic hedonism of the dream, together with its transitoriness, is so close to chaos is in itself illustrative of the *coexistence* of order and chaos in Cernuda's love poetry.

What about 'Cuerpo en pena'? The presence of order is less obvious, as it is generally in the Surrealist-influenced poetry. But the first line of the fifth stanza is 'Flores de luz tranquila despiertan a lo lejos,'[216]: even here, in the depths of despair, there seems to be something positive. It is far away, no more than 'awaking', but it is still there. The persona's commitment to it is reiterated in the penultimate stanza, in the phrase 'hacia la flor sin nombre'[217]. What is more, the poem is written in regular Alexandrines, which reflects a desire for poetic order even in the midst of existential chaos. All around is chaotic, and yet still the poem hints that the persona has to seek order, however far away it might be, has to try to unite the two poles, however strained and tense the meeting might be.

Poetics of Desire', *Ibero-Romania*, 27 (1988), 75). The phrase 'make do' further suggests that memories are not entirely positive.

[215]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 234.

[216]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 145.

[217]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 146.

Let us return now to the later poetry, where order is predominant. We have already seen the presence of order and chaos together in 'Vereda del cuco'. 'Urania' is however about as close to an ideal of order that is conceivable in Cernuda's poetry, and yet even here there are discordant notes. In the penultimate stanza, the power of this experience of order is said to work 'Sobre el dolor informe de la vida,/Sosegando el espíritu a su acento'[218]. This cerebral experience does have considerable value in its own right, but it is nevertheless not absolute. It is *exclusively* a spiritual experience which has an *effect* on day-to-day reality. It still contrasts with that day-to-day reality: this time chaos has met order. Thus what a careful reading shows us is the extent to which, time after time, chaos meets order and order meets chaos. They stand side by side as a constant dichotomy — always present and always in conflict. In the midst of chaos there is the search for order, in the apparent finding of order there is an awareness of chaos. It is a continual awareness of the meeting of the two poles in Cernuda's own existence and perpetual striving to bring those two poles together into the final order which is the individual poems. The ultimate goal is to make *that* order look, Janus-like, in two different directions at once. This ambivalence is illustrated further by comparison with the writing of Mann and Kafka, for concerns in their works are united in *La realidad y el deseo*. The desire to achieve a sense of order and harmony is also a goal of Aschenbach in *Der Tod in Venedig*, while the world of *Das Schloß*, in which the 'love' is the sordid converse of Platonic love, is more representative of the cries of grief which characterise the more desperate moments of *Donde habite el olvido*. What is more, the awareness in Cernuda's later poetry of the continuing presence of chaos illustrates further Aschenbach's delusion. This in turn leads us to wonder if we are, even in the later poetry, not so far away from the world of *Das Schloß*.

---

[218]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 328-9.

Synthesis

So what is the result of the involvement in 'love'? To become involved directly in 'love' proves to be, in adolescence, a mild sense of alienation and chaos, leading in maturity to direct entanglement in the negative emotions associated with a world which has lost irrefutably its point of orientation, which cause 'one-to-one' relationships to appear fraught with difficulty. Catastrophe appears inevitable, for a range of reasons: the sexual drive itself is overwhelming, and indeed apparently malevolent to the point of being destructive of one's very self. Relationships are empty and sordid. Partners are egocentric. The attempt to re-enact the Romantic ideal of the 'Liebestod' is no longer effective.

The yearning for order however remains alive. The Platonic concepts of proceeding from the specific earthly example to the general concepts of the eternal Forms are evoked in both Mann and Cernuda and seen to fail; the same sort of traditional perception of the transcendental power of 'love' appears to be parodied in Kafka's *Das Schloß*. Catastrophe is inevitable when attempting to find order in the material world in this way, for all the problems of the direct experience of 'love' manifest themselves before it is possible to find order.

This is the case up to a point. Cernuda, however, tries again, and this time he does manage to find order in a quasi-mystical experience which takes him out of the sad trials of his earthly existence. He does however still belong to this imperfect world, and, like all things, the bliss of these moments cannot be captured forever. Once again the seeds of chaos are sown. In 'love', order and chaos are always present.

Chapter Four

Search for Order in the Material World II: Art

Section A:

The Theory of Art

Thomas Mann

In the case of three artists it is hardly surprising that art itself should have a significant rôle in a quest for order. The issue of art in the work of Mann, Kafka and Cernuda is however extremely complex. The search for order in art is not merely a question of the behaviour of protagonists or personae within works. Certainly this is important: it is necessary first of all to try and proceed to a fuller understanding of the general theory of what art is and how an individual may (or may not) find order when he becomes involved in it, and it is this question which shall form the opening section of the present chapter. What the question of art also entails is how the artists seek to give order to their works of art, or the problems inherent in doing so, and this will form the second section.

If we turn first to Thomas Mann's creative *œuvre*, then, a cursory glance at it is enough to establish that the nature of art and the figure of the artist are recurrent themes. From *Buddenbrooks* to *Doktor Faustus*, art and artists reappear in his work, but the attitudes remain broadly similar: an ironic stance which can recognise both the positive potentialities of art *and* its problems, the unhappy mixture of a patrician North German 'Bürger' and the Bohemian artist. The principal focus will again be on the early work, especially *Buddenbrooks*, *Tonio Kröger* and *Der Tod in Venedig*, although the interesting contrast which can be seen in the later novel *Lotte in Weimar* will also be worthy of brief mention.

Much has been made in this thesis of the fact that the various searches for order have been undertaken in response to personal alienation and an awareness that life is chaotic. This is equally true of the search for order in art, and can be seen in particular in Hanno Buddenbrook and Gustav von Aschenbach. It will be recalled that Hanno Buddenbrook represents the last stage in the process of the Buddenbrook dynasty's 'Verfall' from order into chaos, and that consequently Hanno's life is far more chaotic than it is ordered. It is at this stage that art really takes a hold on the Buddenbrooks[1]. A

[1]There are of course other members of the family who have taken an interest in art. Christian is very fond of

good example is to be found in part XI, chapter 2, at the end of the performance of *Lohengrin*, to which he has been taken as a treat after the torture of his dental treatment:

> 'Das singende, schimmernde Glück war verstummt und erloschen, mit fiebrigem Kopfe hatte er sich daheim in seinem Zimmer wiedergefunden und war gewahr geworden, daß nur ein paar Stunden des Schlafes dort in seinem Bett ihn von grauem Alltag trennten.'[2]

What is relevant at this stage is not so much the positive effect of the opera as the contrast with daily life. Daily life is 'der graue Alltag', and needs some kind of order. Art, however, can be no more than an escape from daily life: the possibility of permanent, lasting order is non-existent. This is not all. There is a warning even here about the nature of art: Hanno goes to bed 'mit *fiebrigem* Kopfe'. There is a danger that Hanno's involvement in music will be too strong, that its grip upon him will have problems of its own[3].

There is also chaos in Aschenbach's life. The extent to which sexual repression characterised Aschenbach's earlier life, followed by the all-consuming passion of his last weeks, was discussed above[4]. The majority of Aschenbach's life is characterised by order. There are however suggestions that his writing is an outlet for his life of sexual repression:

> 'Gustav Aschenbach war der Dichter all derer, die am Rande der Erschöpfung arbeiten, ... all dieser Moralisten der Leistung, die ... durch Willensverzückung und kluge Verwaltung sich wengistens eine Zeitlang die Wirkungen der Größe abgewinnen.'[5]

---

art, especially the theatre, but he is a dilettante figure. Gerda, Hanno's mother, is genuinely artistic, and it is likely that Hanno's gift (such as it is) comes from her, but she is not a Buddenbrook. Even old Johann Buddenbrook, Hanno's great-grandfather, plays the flute, but it is simple and uninvolved. Hanno is the first member of the male line to be deeply affected by music.

[2]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 716.

[3]This duality is summed up by Vogt as '»Gegengift« zu Realitätshärte und Erkenntnisekel' (p. 109).

[4]See above, p. 154ff.

[5]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 569.

This is taken from the second chapter, where the narrator stresses and even over-stresses (even to the point of being somewhat disconcerting for the reader) the 'heroism' of Aschenbach, whose practice of art has triumphed over adversity. (Perhaps it would be less unsettling if there were more concrete evidence of the art itself that Aschenbach has allegedly produced rather than the exclusive concentration on the personal cost involved in producing it.) Aschenbach's production of art is a conscious controlling and ordering of his life. If Aschenbach needs order, then he too must be alienated (for all that he is not prepared to admit it). It is in effect an admission of the problems which he faces.

There are problems with the art in which Hanno Buddenbrook, in particular, becomes involved, and this allows us to see the other side of the chaos involved in art. It is profoundly ironic that the desire for order in art actually brings the artist closer to chaos. Not chaos in the sense of spiritual desolation or alienation, but a more 'primeval' form of chaos which Nietzsche called 'das Dionysische'[6] and which both Nietzsche and Mann believed to inhere in 'true' art[7]. As far as *Buddenbrooks* is concerned, this type of chaos is intimately bound up with the rôle of Wagner's music, whose thick, chromatic texture is powerful and intoxicating. Herr Pfühl, the church organist, initially condemns Wagner as 'das Chaos'[8], and the effect on Hanno is very clear:

> '[Das Glück] war über ihn gekommen mit seinen Weihen und Entzückungen, seinem heimlichen Erschauern und Erbeben, seinem plötzlichen innerlichen Schluchzen, seinem ganzen überschwänglichen und unersättlichen Rausche...'[9]

---

[6]As he says in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*:

> '... das Wesen des *Dionysischen*, das uns am nächsten noch durch die Analogie des *Rausches* gebracht wird.'

(Nietzsche, *Werke*, I, p. 24.)

[7]For a fuller discussion of the rôle of the 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian', see for example Roger A. Nicholls, *Nietzsche in the Early Work of Thomas Mann* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955), pp. 85-8, or Pütz, *Kunst und Künstlerexistenz bei Nietzsche und Thomas Mann: Zum Problem des ästhetischen Perspektivismus in der Moderne*, 2nd ed. (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1975), pp. 13-14.

[8]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 508.

[9]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 716. This effect is ironised by the narrator, who points out the inadequacies of the performance (p. 716). (A similar process takes place in the 'Novelle' *Tristan*, when the playing of the *Tristan und Isolde* music is ironised by 'Rätin' Spatz's bored reaction (*Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 246).) None of this

The crucial word here is 'Rausche': the music has taken over Hanno. This however is the antithesis of order, and this raises serious doubts as to the value of this sort of artistic experience[10]. Art is not composed exclusively of order. It is by its nature deeply related to and involved with the forces of chaos, with dark, even demonic forces. (While once a prevalent idea, now, at the end of the twentieth century, this sounds like something of a Romantic cliché. We should not however let this perspective obscure our understanding.) This idea also inheres in *Der Tod in Venedig*, where the narrator comments on Aschenbach's 'anderthalb Seiten erlesener Prosa', written in the presence of Tadzio:

> 'Es ist sicher gut, daß die Welt nur das schöne Werk, nicht auch seine Ursprünge, nicht seine Entstehungsbedingungen kennt; denn die Kenntnis der Quellen, aus denen dem Künstler Eingebung floß, würde sie oftmals verwirren, abschrecken und so die Wirkungen des Vortrefflichen aufheben.'[11]

Mann's treatment of the 'chaotic' inspiration of art in *Der Tod in Venedig* is not marred by the hackneyed excesses of Romanticism (to which Cernuda does by comparison succumb at times). This is because the focus is on the shocking intensity of erotic feeling, showing how Dionysian eroticism lies at the heart of Aschenbach's 'erlesener Prosa'. This is perhaps Mann's most profound and convincing exploration of the 'evils' which can inhere in art, for it demonstrates the way in which the artist, in seeking inspiration, can delve below the 'civilised' surface of humanity and encounter the raging 'chaotic' passions which are part of human psychology and sexuality[12]. Furthermore, art needs this,

---

discounts Hanno's involvement however.

[10]Hirst (p. 265) argues that 'the longer term effect of Wagner on Hanno is one of enervation, depression, hopeless despair, despondency and a complete undermining of confidence'. See also Erwin Koppen, *Dekadenter Wagnerismus: Studien zur europäischen Literatur des Fin de siècle* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), p. 273. Koopmann contrasts Hanno's 'decadent' music with his friend Kai Mölln's writing, arguing that Kai's writing is not 'Ausdruck der Verzweiflung' (unlike Hanno's music), but 'eine legitime Aufgabe' (*Die Entwicklung*, p. 131). While this is interesting, it is doubtful whether there is enough evidence of Kai's writing to substantiate such a claim.

[11]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 608.

[12]As Camille Paglia comments in general terms (*Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), p. 56):

> 'Sex is a descent to the nether realms, a daily sinking from sky-cult to earth-cult. It is abdominal, abominable, daemonic.'

Mann says, to give it its profundity and power.

If there are these two sides to the chaos, then — alienation, and the darker, chaotic side of life — what rôle does order have to play? Let us leave the problems of the artistic experience to one side for the time being and concentrate on the rôle of order in the artistic process. All of these chaotic, 'Dionysian' passions need order, for art is an ordering process. The inspiration cannot exist on its own: it must be given its unique form, its 'order', by the artist himself. In *Der Tod in Venedig*, this is precisely what Aschenbach achieves when he writes his essay[13] on the beach in Venice:

> 'Nie hatte er die Lust des Wortes süßer empfunden, nie so gewußt, daß Eros im Worte sei, wie während der gefährlich köstlichen Stunden, in denen er ... im Angesicht des Idols und die Musik seiner Stimme im Ohr, nach Tadzio's Schönheit seine kleine Abhandlung, — jene anderthalb Seiten erlesener Prosa formte,'[14]

The two sides of art come together in these rather mysterious 'anderthalb Seiten erlesener Prosa'. (Why do we learn so little about the prose itself?) The inspiration is provided by the presence of Tadzio and the sound of his voice, described as 'Musik', i.e., a work of art. Then the new work itself gives form to the particular experience[15]. Furthermore, the fact that it is a lived experience which Aschenbach models into prose demonstrates not only the need for 'chaotic inspiration', but also the positive effect which artistic creation can have on life itself. Indeed, Aschenbach's ultimate tragedy lies in the fact that, immediately after this episode, he abandons the strive for literary order and concentrates *exclusively* on the lived experience. If he had continued to use his experiences to make something new, then the outcome of the story may well have been very different.

---

[13]We may wonder whether an essay is 'art'. At least in terms of the 'Novelle' it appears to be such, for one of Aschenbach's greatest works is an 'Abhandlung über »Geist und Kunst«' (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 565).

[14]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 608.

[15]See also Josef Häfele and Hans Stammel, *Thomas Mann: Der Tod in Venedig* (Frankfurt am Main: Moritz Diesterweg, 1992), p. 35, and Pütz, 'Der Ausbruch aus der Negativität: Das Ethos im *Tod in Venedig*', *Thomas Mann Jahrbuch*, 1 (1988), 7.

How often is this union of chaos with order achieved by Mann's protagonists? The answer is rarely, for Mann's artist figures are frequently decadent, in the sense that they lay too much stress on one side of life to the detriment of others. Both Hanno Buddenbrook and Aschenbach are 'decadent' artist figures, but in totally different ways. Hanno's artistic creation consists in fantasising at the piano. The art which he produces is, however, highly questionable:

> 'Es lag etwas Brutales und Stumpfsinniges und zugleich etwas asketisch Religiöses, etwas wie Glaube und Selbstaufgabe in dem fanatischen Kultus dieses Nichts, dieses Stücks Melodie, ... und etwas zynisch Verzweifeltes, etwas wie Wille zu Wonne und Untergang in der Gier, mit der die letzte Süßigkeit aus ihr gesogen wurde,'[16]

This is an evocation of dark, 'Dionysian' passions, and the sexual, masturbatory overtones are obvious. (The sexual element is the most convincing part of this description: it is in danger in places of being a little exaggerated and elaborate. The 'Wonne und Untergang' especially is perhaps too reminiscent of Romantic demons and similar concepts[17].) In particular, this type of art is exclusively passion and inspiration. The ordering principle is completely absent. It is 'dieses Nichts', pure fantasy. Hanno's music is decadent because it fails to give order to the chaos[18].

Aschenbach has the opposite problem to Hanno when it comes to artistic production. Certainly what he writes in Venice is 'erlesen', but there are indications that Aschenbach's art before his experiences in Venice is 'decadent' because it is sterile, lacking genuine 'Dionysian' chaotic inspiration:

> '[Die Maja-Welt oder die epischen Massen waren] in kleinen Tagewerken aus aberhundert Einzelinspirationen zur Größe emporgeschichtet und nur darum

---

[16]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, pp. 765-6.

[17]Interestingly, there is nothing ironic before or after this passage to mock or deflate it, unlike the poor quality of the *Lohengrin* production (see above, p. 219). It appears entirely serious.

[18]Kaufmann's comment (p. 92) that 'the sick little artist moves toward translating being into pure, creative representation, the redemption of life through its pure expression' is remarkably inaccurate: Mann's 'sick little artists' fail miserably in this attempt!

> so durchaus und an jedem Punkte vortrefflich ..., weil ihr Schöpfer mit einer Willensdauer und Zähigkeit ... an die eigentliche Herstellung ausschließlich seine stärksten und würdigsten Stunden gewandt hatte.'[19]

The narrator again emphasises how conscientiously and 'heroically' Aschenbach works at his art, and the implication is that there is genuine 'Größe' in his writing. Nevertheless the evidence undermines this claim to 'Größe'. There is plainly no real inspiration which could ever compare with the passion of his later encounter with Tadzio. There are only 'Einzelinspirationen', isolated details which are made to serve as a substitute for 'genuine' inspiration. There is therefore something cold and artificial about the art which Aschenbach habitually produces. It is hard to be convinced that 'Willensdauer und Zähigkeit' are really enough, because they are made to transform what is not really there in the first place, i.e., genuine contact with life and the world[20]. Aschenbach's art is decadent because the form lacks the vital inspiration of chaos[21].

While the decadent artist figure is the predominant one in Mann's fiction, continuing even until his last major novel *Doktor Faustus*, it is not the only one. It is at this point that it is necessary to depart from the concentration on Mann's early writing, and look briefly at the later novel *Lotte in Weimar*, which is rather more positive in its outlook. While there is not the space to discuss it in any detail, this novel consists almost exclusively of a collection of conversations about art and Goethe. (With such heavy concentration on these conversations on art, personally I find the content of the novel rather self-satisfied and self-indulgent.) It presents Goethe as a man of synthesis, a man who is able to bring together all the sides of existence:

---

[19]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 567.

[20]See also Bridges, p. 207, and Inta Miske Ezergailis, *Male and Female: An Approach to Thomas Mann's Dialectic* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), pp. 47 & 50. Keith M. May makes the similar point that Aschenbach 'valued effort for its own sake' (*Nietzsche and Modern Literature: Themes in Yeats, Rilke, Mann and Lawrence* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1988), p. 89.

[21]Henry Walter Brann makes the interesting point that Aschenbach 'hat ... die künstlerische Form dazu erniedrigt, dem egoistischen »Willen« zu dienen' ('Thomas Mann und Schopenhauer', *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch*, 43 (1962), 120), quoting that 'sein ganzes Wesen [war] auf Ruhm gestellt' (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 565). While this is discussed in terms of Schopenauerian philosophy, it also seems relevant to highlight that this is a further sign of Aschenbach's 'decadence' and failure to produce 'true' art.

> 'Ist nicht Versöhnung und Ausgleich all mein Betreiben und meine Sache Bejahen, Geltenlassen und Fruchtbarmachen des einen wie des anderen, Gleichgewicht, Zusammenklang? Nur alle Kräfte zusammen machen die Welt, und wichtig ist jede,'[22]

As Hollingdale comments, 'Mann's Goethe ... wants to be all-sided, to experience and contain everything'[23]. The Goethe figure is the ideal artist figure, the one for whom all facets of existence are held together: not necessarily resolved in a single unified vision, but certainly in such a way that 'Gleichgewicht' is achieved. This is the one way in which to cope with the order and chaos: accepting them for what they are, despite the tension and conflict[24]. It is an ideal, but Mann rarely propounds it, although there is one notable instance in his earlier work, at the end of *Tonio Kröger*. Tonio is writing to Lisaweta:

> '... ich sehe in ein Gewimmel von Schatten menschlicher Gestalten, die mir winken, daß ich sie banne und erlöse: tragische und lächerliche und solche, die beides zugleich sind, — und diesen bin ich sehr zugetan.'[25]

Tonio Kröger's resolution is probably the closest Mann comes in his early work to portraying a genuinely positive artist figure who believes he will be able to overcome decadence. Particularly significant in this quotation is surely the phrase 'solche, die beide zugleich sind': opposites held in tension, thus prefiguring the Goethe figure[26]. While Mann's artists only seldom achieve a union of order and chaos in art, it is even more seldom that this type of order is found in life: Goethe is the ideal, but the picture in *Lotte in Weimar* is only Mann's subjective image of him, as Hollingdale reminds us[27]. Tonio

---

[22]Mann, *Lotte in Weimar*, p. 299.

[23]Hollingdale, p. 119. See also Hermann Kunisch, 'Thomas Manns Goethe-Bild', in *Thomas Mann 1875-1975: Vorträge in München-Zürich-Lübeck*, ed. Beatrix Bludau, Eckhard Heftrich and Helmut Koopmann (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1977), especially pp. 318-9.

[24]I fail to be persuaded by Olaf Ludmann's argument that Goethe 'sich dem Absoluten, der Kunst, aufopfert und dadurch zwangsläufig auf das Leben Verzicht leisten muß' ('Einige Gedanken zum Thema »Goethe als literarische Gestalt«. Zu Thomas Manns »Lotte in Weimar«', *Goethe Jahrbuch*, 97 (1980), 139): the novel is quite specifically about the genius of the Goethe figure, who has *embraced* life.

[25]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 341.

[26]Tamara S. Evans in fact sees Goethean echoes even in this very passage ('«Ich werde Besseres machen...»: Zu Thomas Manns Goethe-Nachfolge in *Tonio Kröger*', *Colloquia Germanica*, 15 (1982), 90 & 92-3).

[27]Hollingdale, p. 118.

Kröger, meanwhile, can only hope and try to achieve that synthesis in an unknown future; it is *not* a present reality.

What effect does the involvement in art have on life? For Mann's artists, this involvement detracts from their vitality and their ability to live as normal people. Hanno Buddenbrook is an obvious example of this, for his passionate devotion to Wagnerian music is yet more evidence of his total unsuitability for the life of a North German 'Bürger' and businessman[28]. What is more, so many of the protagonists of Mann's early stories who are interested in art are alienated from life, not because they cannot create art, but because they are sensitive people who are deeply affected by and involved with art: *Der kleine Herr Friedemann, Der Bajazzo, Gladius Dei, Tonio Kröger* and *Wälsungenblut* are all examples of stories with such figures as their protagonists. If we consider also *Der Tod in Venedig*, it will be recalled that the problem with Aschenbach's artistic production is his lack of interaction with the world. The irony is that it is this desire to create art which has alienated him from the world in the first place: when the story opens, Aschenbach is in the following frame of mind:

> 'Überreizt von der schwierigen und gefährlichen, eben jetzt eine höchste Behutsamkeit, Umsicht, Eindringlichkeit und Genauigkeit des Willens erfordernden Arbeit der Vormittagsstunden, ...'[29]

There are two sides to Aschenbach's alienation: on the more immediate level, his feeling of being unable to produce anything of literary merit causes a sense of frustration. The other side of his alienation consists in the fact that, aside from his artistic career, he has no other life whatsoever. His devotion to art is something of an *idée fixe* which he cannot exorcise and which has completely denied him any other kind of existence. He has been so devoted to seeking to produce literary order that he has left himself wide open to the chaos of existential alienation. It is then when his ability to write begins to fail him that

---

[28]Frizen points out that, for Nietzsche, interest in music was in itself a sign of decadence, precisely because music is 'innerlich' (p. 109). Frizen further points out the similarities with Schopenhauer's philosophy of music (especially p. 122; see also Swales, *'Buddenbrooks'*, pp. 83-5), although it should not be forgotten that Hanno's response is really something of a Romantic commonplace.

[29]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 559.

he discovers he is quite incapable of surviving in the world.

The artistic experience, i.e.; the effect that a confrontation with a work of art has on the individual, still requires analysis. It is possibly here that the alienated individual's desire to find some kind of order is most obvious, and which is not limited to people who are themselves artists. As we know, Hanno Buddenbrook's attendance at a performance of *Lohengrin* has (at least in the short term) a positive effect on him[30]. It makes life bearable and meaningful. Is it then a finding of order? At best it is no more than temporary, for the experience soon comes to an end[31]. This is not all. It was also seen that afterwards his head is 'fiebrig' and that he is in a state of 'Rausch'. This is an indication of the fundamental problem of the artistic experience. We are told that Hanno had felt 'wie wehe die Schönheit tut'[32]: the individual can see again the Dionysian chaos which inspired the work of art. That can lead the individual *back towards* that very chaos. The extent to which the 'pain' of beauty is present in Mann's writing can be seen also in *Der Tod in Venedig.* Aschenbach thinks of Tadzio in terms of a work of art, envisioning him as a Greek statue:

> 'Sein Antlitz ... erinnerte an griechische Bildwerke aus edelster Zeit, und bei reinster Vollendung der Form war es von so einmalig persönlichem Reiz, daß der Schauende weder in Natur noch bildender Kunst etwas ähnlich Geglücktes angetroffen zu haben glaubte.'[33]

Aschenbach is witness to the problematical nature of pagan beauty[34]. Camille Paglia comments that Tadzio's 'blinding Apollonian light is a radiation disintegrating the moral world'[35]. Certainly Tadzio's rôle as a work of art is enough to cause Aschenbach's life to

---

[30]See above, p. 218.

[31]Johannes Mittenzwei misses this point when he states that music in *Buddenbrooks* can help the individual 'vor den Aufgaben und Forderungen des Tages in die *Freiheit* zu flüchten' (*Das Musikalische in der Literatur: Ein Überblick von Gottfried von Straßburg bis Brecht* (Halle: VEB Verlag Sprache und Literatur, 1962), p. 322).

[32]Mann, *Buddenbrooks,* p. 716.

[33]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 585.

[34]As Christoph Geiser comments, Aschenbach lives 'zum Opfer des schönen Scheins der Kunstwelt' (*Naturalismus und Symbolismus im Frühwerk Thomas Manns* (Bern: Francke, 1971), p. 68).

[35]Paglia, p. 122.

disintegrate, but the 'Apollonian light' is an over-simplification. Aschenbach conceives of Tadzio as Apollonian form and order, but what this does is to blind him to the Dionysian chaos which lies within it. The finished statue is Apollonian, but the *model* for a statue is a living person, with physical drives and impulses, just like Tadzio himself. Aschenbach sees the Apollonian order, and in the course of that he is brought, like Hanno, into contact with the Dionysian chaos which lies within it, which is what causes his downfall. *That* is the dual nature of the artistic experience for Thomas Mann, reflecting the rôle of art in general terms in his writing: art can be sought in response to the chaos of alienation, but art itself is seen as dependent upon and wholly involved with the dark forces of primeval Dionysian chaos. Art seeks to give order to that chaos, but the artist figure is only occasionally successful, for he can fail to give the chaos order, and also fail to give the inspiration of chaos to the Apollonian order. Furthermore, the artist's very involvement with art can divorce him from life and so take him back to the chaos of alienation. Involvement with art is involvement with the continual dialectic of order and chaos.

Kafka in his creative writing devotes only limited space to art and the artist. (There is not really anything in *Das Schloß* for example which could be seen to relate to art.) Furthermore, while attempts that have been made to draw parallels between Kafka the writer and protagonists who are engaged in some act of writing can be illuminating, they are based on a rather shaky premise, namely that the protagonist can be seen as a literary incarnation of Kafka himself[36]. Nevertheless there are instances in which art does come to the fore in his writing, especially in episodes in *Die Verwandlung* and *Der Prozeß*, and in *Josefine, die Sängerin*, as well as in frequent passages of his 'confessional' writings (his diaries, letters, aphorisms, etc.).

There is plenty of evidence that chaos is the predominant mode of existence for Kafka's protagonists. This is true in particularly extreme form of Gregor Samsa of *Die Verwandlung*. The keynote of this story is Gregor's total inadequacy as a human being, and indeed his metamorphosis into an 'ungeheures Ungeziefer' can be interpreted as an illustration of his inability to exist as a complete human being[37]. Samsa's existence is a life in total chaos:

> 'Die geschäftlichen Aufregungen sind viel größer als im eigentlichen Geschäft zu Hause, und außerdem ist mir noch diese Plage des Reisens auferlegt, die Sorgen um die Zuganschlüsse, das unregelmäßige, schlechte

---

[36]See for example Corngold's interpretation of *Das Urteil* (pp. 24-46). The dangers of this sort of identification can be observed in Binder's analysis, when he takes this idea to an almost ludicrous extreme by insisting, when discussing *Das Schloß* (p. 486):

> 'Es ist unwahrscheinlich, daß in einem derart komplizierten und differenzierten System von Romangestalten und deren Konstellationen, die Kafkas Vorstellungswelt abbilden, das literarische Schaffen des Dichters nicht an markanter Stelle repräsentiert worden sein sollte.'

This remarkable sentence, from which any trace of logic is totally absent (why *should* Kafka talk about 'das literarische Schaffen'?), is Binder's first reason for the assertion that Momus' secretarial duties are 'ein Bild für Kafkas Schreiben' (p. 486). I cannot agree with this claim. For further attempts at identifying 'models' for *Das Schloß*, see also Leonhard M. Fiedler, 'Zwischen »Wahrheit« und »Methode«. Kafka-Rede in Mainz', *Neue Rundschau*, 94, No. 4 (1983), 200-1.

[37]Gholam Reza Ghanadan argues that Gregor's metamorphosis 'is possible since ... he lacks the inner richness that could have otherwise given him an over-riding sense of personal cohesiveness' ('Kafka: The De-alienated Artist', Thesis Lancaster 1976, p. 104).

> Essen, ein immer wechselnder, nie andauernder, nie herzlich werdender menschlicher Verkehr.'[38]

Modern business is an endless round of seemingly pointless chores, with the workers engaged in constant activity. (The same is true of the employees of the court and the castle in *Der Prozeß* and *Das Schloß.*) Whereas in these novels many of the employees are in a position of authority vis-à-vis Josef K. and K., here the employee is the victim of his work environment. The managers are the oppressors, and Gregor is the oppressed, a cringing and crawling, feeble, useless individual. It is easy to feel sympathy for Samsa, and considering the parallels between Kafka's own life and his creation[39], he too probably felt sympathy for him, but there is also scorn. He is pathetic, exemplified by his sense of panic and frustration in the face of matters as simple as 'Zuganschlüsse'. It is in this state of a total disintegration of his life that Gregor will discover a previously unknown interest in music when he hears his sister playing the violin.

What is the nature of art for Kafka? In Kafka's writing, art is far closer to chaos than it is to order, which casts doubt from the start on any success that Gregor Samsa might have in turning towards art. There are indications in some of Kafka's letters (admittedly not in his creative writing[40]) that he entertains ideas about the significance of 'Dionysian' chaos. As early as 1903 Kafka wrote to his friend Oskar Pollak, saying that 'Gott will nicht, daß ich schreibe, ich aber, ich muß'[41]. This could suggest that Kafka thought that there is something fundamentally wrong with art. He returns to this idea in greater detail in 1922, in a letter to Max Brod:

> 'Das Schreiben ist ein süßer wunderbarer Lohn, aber wofür? In der Nacht war

---

[38]Kafka, *Erzählungen*, p. 58.

[39]As John Hibberd says, 'it grew from Kafka's experience' (*Kafka: 'Die Verwandlung'* (London: Grant and Cutler, 1985), p. 52). Incidentally, in conversation with Gustav Janouch, Kafka says that 'Samsa ist kein Kryptogramm', adding that the name 'ist nicht restlos Kafka', although he does admit that it is 'im gewissen Sinne eine Indiskretion' (Janouch, p. 55). For other possible significances of the name Gregor Samsa, see Hana Arie-Graifman, 'Milena, Odradek, Samsa. Zur tschechischen Etymologie einiger Eigennamen bei Kafka', *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, 72 (1991), 97 & 99.

[40]Kafka's diaries and letters hardly deserve the same status as his literary output. Nevertheless what he says there merits attention.

[41]Kafka, *Briefe 1902-1924*, p. 21.

> es mir ... klar, daß es der Lohn für Teufelsdienst ist. Dieses Hinabgehen zu den dunklen Mächten, diese Entfesselung von Natur aus gebundener Geister [*sic*], fragwürdige Umarmungen und was alles noch unten vor sich gehen mag, ... Und das Teuflische daran scheint mir sehr klar. Es ist die Eitelkeit und Genußsucht,'[42]

There is a curious mixture of ideas in this passage. The fact that writing is said to be a 'süßer wunderbarer Lohn' suggests positive benefit, but this is contradicted by every other sentiment here. Writing is also 'Teufelsdienst'. There is however an odd mixture of concepts even within this definition of 'Teufelsdienst'. First, there is a Romantic-sounding collection of 'dunklen Mächten' and 'Geister', which is entirely consonant with the idea of the 'devil'. On the other hand, 'das Teuflische' apparently relates to 'Eitelkeit und Genußsucht'. How can these different strands of thought be reconciled? The concepts of 'Eitelkeit' and 'Genußsucht' as central to the character of the artist are similar to Nietzsche's ideas that the artist is a 'charlatan' who has almost to 'flirt' with his audience[43]: he has to have a voice which is heard, and he revels in the acclaim which he receives. This idea Kafka explores further in the picture of that very questionable artist, the 'Hungerkünstler', who is held to be 'reklamesüchtig' or a 'Schwindler'[44]. It is not however enough for Kafka to explain that 'das Teuflische' is exclusively 'Eitelkeit und Genußsucht', because this does *not* account for the 'dark powers' and 'bound spirits'. We are forced to accept that, in addition to this, there is something of the dark Dionysian chaos involved here too, although again it might sound a little over-Romantic from a present-day perspective.

What about the 'süßer wunderbarer Lohn' referred to above? On the 27th of January, again in 1922, Kafka talked in his diary about a 'vielleicht gefährlicher, vielleicht erlösender Trost des Schreibens'[45]. While this statement too suggests the problematic nature of art, and while 'vielleicht' certainly casts doubt on how beneficial

---

[42]Kafka, *Briefe 1902-1924*, pp. 384-5.

[43]See Pütz, *Kunst und Künstlerexistenz*, pp. 39-41, and Janet Lungstrum, 'Self-Constructs of Impermanence: Kafka, Nietzsche and Creativity', *Seminar*, 27 (1991), 113.

[44]Kafka, *Erzählungen*, p. 193. Spann's comment (p. 166) that 'Kafka never concerned himself with the artist and his relation to society' is simply inaccurate.

[45]Kafka, *Tagebücher*, p. 413.

writing can be, nevertheless there is a definite suggestion that the act of writing can have a positive effect on the artist's alienated existence[46]. Kafka uses artistic creation as something of an escape in a way which compares with Hanno's attendance at *Lohengrin*, or perhaps more accurately the fantasising at the piano, since it is actively creative, rather than the more passive involvement of a spectator or listener. It is however supremely ironic in Kafka's case, for it cannot be reconciled with the attitude he has towards that act of artistic creation: it is an order which is encountered, oddly enough, in the very midst of chaos.

There is rather more to the question of literary order as far as Kafka is concerned. One reason for this is the fact that Kafka so rarely managed to achieve order in his literary creations. With the exception of a handful of short stories, his works are largely unfinished and frequently fragmentary. Kafka however does have an aim of order for art which goes far beyond the 'erlösende Trost'. The following is a diary entry he made on the 25th of September, 1917:

> 'Zeitweilige Befriedigung kann ich von Arbeiten wie »Landarzt« noch haben, vorausgesetzt, daß mir etwas Derartiges noch gelingt (sehr unwahrscheinlich). Glück aber nur, falls ich die Welt ins Reine, Wahre, Unveränderliche heben kann.'[47]

What is 'das Reine, Wahre, Unveränderliche'? It seems to point towards some kind of absolute realm[48], but at least one critic has suggested that it refers to a use of language which could be deemed 'rein' inasmuch as there is an 'Armut des Wortschatzes' and a 'klare[], strenge[] Syntax ohne hypotaktische Zugeständnisse und explikative Beschränkungen'[49]. Ultimately this dilemma is unresolvable: it could refer to a

---

[46]See also Peter-André Alt, '"Das Gute ist in gewissem Sinne trostlos." Motive der Melancholie bei Kafka', *Modern Austrian Literature*, 21, No. 2 (1988), 72.

[47]Kafka, *Tagebücher*, p. 389.

[48]See for example Werner Hoffmann, *»Ansturm gegen die letzte irdische Grenze«*, p. 16.

[49]Susanne Kessler, *Kafka — Poetik der sinnlichen Welt* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1983), p. 158. Marthe Robert speaks in similar terms (although not referring to this specific dairy entry) when she says that Kafka 'arbeitet am Nullpunkt der Synchronie, auf einer Ebene, auf der die Sprache, unbehelligt von allem, was das Gesprochene seinen Idiomen sowie der großen historischen Literatur

transportation on to another plane of existence, in which case Kafka sees artistic creation as at least a potential means of glimpsing a higher, more permanent, transcendent order, the realm of the Absolute. On the other hand it could refer to a perfect, ideal kind of literary creation. Whichever is true (and it is possible that both are true, simultaneously), what is evident is that, if this kind of art does not lead to God (or a god or Absolute), then it is in itself a *god-like art*, for these are absolute terms which Kafka is employing. This is further illustrated in a diary entry from the 16th of January, 1922:

> 'Diese ganze Literatur ist Ansturm gegen die Grenze, und sie hätte sich, wenn nicht der Zionismus dazwischengekommen wäre, leicht zu einer neuen Geheimlehre, einer Kabbala, entwickeln können.'[50]

The allusion to Zionism and Jewish mysticism would seem to point directly towards the notion of artistic creation as quite specifically a means of leading the individual towards the Absolute. It is however not so straightforward. First, it is not reality, but only a proposition, stressed by the use of a modal verb in the pluperfect subjunctive. Furthermore, he calls it 'eine *neue* Geheimlehre'. Could this in fact be a kind of pagan 'art as god or idol' rather than a vision of the Divine? Again, both may well be true. The *central* concept is however of an art reaching beyond the mundane and chaotic world and seeking to create something better. The irony is that Kafka denounces art as

---

verdankt, nichts anderes zu bieten hat als ihre Unmittelbarkeit und den Reichtum ihrer Kombinationen' (*Einsam wie Franz Kafka*, trans. Eva Michel-Moldenhauer (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987), p. 153). Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari meanwhile argue that this 'Spracharmut' is Kafka's particular exploitation of Prague German, which, divorced geographically from Germany, was essentially a different language from the German of Germany. They then discuss how Kafka endeavours to write what they call a 'minor literature', where it is not possible to speak of coherent symbolic structures and the like, but instead 'of a polyvalent assemblage' of various individual 'segments' (*Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 87). David H. Miles takes a similar view, arguing that the details in Kafka's writing 'are quite unambiguous, but they are only fragmentary, partial, and incomplete, and hence do not permit association into larger systems or patterns of meaning' ('»Pleats, Pockets, Buckles, and Buttons«: Kafka's New Literalism and the Poetics of the Fragment', in Bennett, Kaes and Lillyman, p. 340), as does Michael Braun, arguing that 'apparently Kafka's writing does not know an inwardness, just bodies, gestures, surfaces' ('Rooms with a View? — Kafka's "Fensterblicke"', *German Studies Review*, 15 (1992), 20). As will be seen, I find this too extreme a position.

For a view opposing Deleuze's and Guattari's ideas of a 'minor literature', see Corngold, 'Kafka and the Dialect of Minor Literature', *College Literature*, 21 (1994), 89-101.

[50]Kafka, *Tagebücher*, pp. 405-6.

'Teufelsdienst'. This is a conflict which cannot be adequately resolved, but can only be explained inasmuch as both order and chaos always seem to exist together.

The status of the artist appears somewhat equivocal: he is involved with 'das Teuflische', but he is also writing 'eine neue Geheimlehre'. As far as Kafka's creative writing is concerned, it is the 'decadent' artist who normally appears. What is more, Kafka is more radical than Thomas Mann. Kafka's artist figures seem to have no genuine inspiration and no capacity for ordering either. It has already been mentioned that people think of the 'Hungerkünstler' as a 'Schwindler', but more fundamentally than this, what kind of art is 'hunger art'? Is there any evidence that it is art at all? It creates nothing. By the same token, 'Josefine, die Sängerin' is allegedly an artist, but her singing is apparently 'nur ein Pfeifen'[51], i.e., not music at all[52]. Most damning of all is perhaps the art of Titorelli, the court artist in *Der Prozeß*, of whose paintings we are given a very clear description:

> '»Eine Heidelandschaft«, sagte der Maler und reichte K. das Bild. Es stellte zwei schwache Bäume dar, die weit voneinander entfernt im dunklen Gras standen. Im Hintergrund war ein vielfarbiger Sonnenuntergang. ... »Hier ist ein Gegenstück zu diesem Bild«, sagte der Maler. ... es war aber nicht der geringste Unterschied gegenüber dem ersten Bild zu merken,'[53]

Aside from the fact that this is a very amusing scene, it is painfully apparent how short of the ideal Titorelli falls. He is not an artist at all. He has no creative imagination whatsoever, no inspiration, and evidently no real talent for painting either. His art is no more than an empty, meaningless façade. Josef K. consults him in the hope that he might be of some help in his court case, but any help he could offer would be of minimal value. Despite Kafka's diary entries, then, the artists he portrays are a pathetic feeble sham who would never be capable of lifting the world 'ins Reine, Wahre, Unveränderliche'[54].

---

[51]Kafka, *Erzählungen*, p. 201.

[52]Patrick Bridgwater argues that her singing is 'Dionysian art' (p. 143). I do not accept that it is any kind of art at all. See also Petr, p. 135.

[53]Kafka, *Der Prozeß*, p. 140.

[54]It seems almost incredible that Heinz Hillmann could contend in his discussion of Titorelli that '[eine Gestalt wie die des Malers] verkörpert ... nur ihre positiven und glückhaften Möglichkeiten' (*Franz Kafka:*

In order to consider what the artist's life is like, it is preferable to return to the confessional writings, for Kafka himself is the only genuine artist about whom he ever writes. In that same letter to Max Brod from 1922, Kafka comments on what he as an artist has done with his life:

> '»Ich habe mich durch das Schreiben nicht losgekauft. Mein Leben lang bin ich gestorben und nun werde ich wirklich sterben. Mein Leben war süßer als das der andern, mein Tod wird um so schrecklicher sein. Der Schriftsteller in mir wird natürlich sofort sterben, denn eine solche Figur hat keinen Boden, hat keinen Bestand, ist nicht einmal aus Staub; ist nur im tollsten irdischen Leben ein wenig möglich, ist nur eine Konstruktion der Genußsucht.«'[55]

This is a considerable indictment of Kafka's own life as a 'Schriftsteller'. The first sentence here appears to contradict the claim that his life has been a failure specifically because of his writing, for he says that this total alienation has been all he has known. Certainly his sense of ontological insecurity has its part to play, but his argumentation is nevertheless remarkably inconsistent: he claims always to have been 'gestorben', only in the next sentence to say that his life was in fact 'süß'. It seems reasonable to assume that his life is 'süß' because of his 'Schreiben': creating art can be a genuinely pleasurable experience. If on the other hand a 'Schriftsteller' 'hat keinen Boden', then this links up with his having been 'dead' all his life. It suggests that he has had no interaction with the world whatsoever, and despite the 'Süßigkeit' derived from writing, it is obvious that as a human being he is being taken rather closer to chaos than to order. The chaos is however perhaps not to be found so much in the alienation from life as it is to be found in the contrast with Mann's Goethe figure, the genius of synthesis. Kafka's image of himself as an artist is of a man of *disintegration*, the antithesis of order, for his life has no positive basis and, as far as society is concerned, no useful purpose, for his effect on society is only to satisfy his own 'Genußsucht'. Art may seem to enhance the life of the artist, but it is an enemy of a fully rounded life[56].

Dichtungstheorie und Dichtungsgestalt (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1964), p. 68).

[55]Kafka, *Briefe 1902-1924*, p. 385.

[56]For a deeper exploration of the negative qualities of Kafka's life as an artist, see Detlef Kremer, 'Die

It is appropriate finally to consider the rôle of the more passive artistic experience. As with Hanno Buddenbrook, it is music which is the artistic genre in question, sought as a response to the chaotic nature of daily life, specifically of Gregor Samsa's daily life. As a human being his life was meaningless and pointless, as an 'ungeheures Ungeziefer' it would appear to have reached the very nadir. It is however then that he is attracted by his sister's violin-playing:

> 'Und doch spielte die Schwester so schön. ... War er ein Tier, da ihn Musik so ergriff? Ihm war, als zeige sich ihm der Weg zu der ersehnten unbekannten Nahrung.'[57]

Just as the performance of *Lohengrin* which Hanno Buddenbrook attends is characterised by 'Schönheit', so too is Gregor's sister's violin-playing, at least as far as Gregor is concerned. (It is important to remember that this is *Gregor's* opinion, not an objective one[58]. The music may not be as 'schön' as he claims.) The rhetorical question which Gregor asks is however highly ironic. The story is devoted to making quite plain that Gregor *is* 'ein Tier' and has ceased to be a human being. The fact that music 'grips' him is not proof of his humanity, but rather evidence of that very nadir of chaos which his existence has reached: it is now that he needs something which could lead him back towards order. It is that which the music then appears to do, guiding him towards 'Nahrung'. It is not quite so straightforward however. This last sentence starts with 'Ihm war, als...'. It is only apparently reality[59]. Furthermore, what is 'die ersehnte unbekannte

---

Identität der Schrift: Flaubert und Kafka', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 63 (1989), 567-8.

[57]Kafka, *Erzählungen*, p. 98.

[58]For an illuminating study of the ways in which Kafka signposts (by means of, for example, parenthetical statements and subjunctives) the extent to which statements are in fact Gregor's own thoughts, see Jürg Schubiger, *Franz Kafka: Die Verwandlung. Eine Interpretation* (Zürich: Atlantis, 1969), pp. 75-103. See also Karin Lynne von Abrams, 'The Idea of "Character" as a Structuring Principle in Kafka's Shorter Fiction', Thesis London 1983, p. 204, and Pascal, p. 32ff.

[59]Gavriel Ben-Ephraim similarly reminds us that this could be 'the final wound to Gregor's illusions' ('Making and Breaking Meaning: Deconstruction, Four-level Allegory and *The Metamorphosis*', *Midwest Quarterly*, 35 (1994), 464).

Nahrung'? We are reminded of Christ's words 'Man does not live on bread alone'[60], but we are also reminded of Gregor's 'unregelmäßige, schlechte Essen' as a human being, and of the rubbish he has eaten since his transformation[61]. Is 'Nahrung' a reference to spiritual nourishment (which suggests that music is the way to order), or physical nourishment? There is no answer, for it is a deliberate ambiguity. Certain things are however clear: on the one hand there is a genuine seeking of something, and something, moreover, that will make life better, more meaningful[62]. While *Der Tod in Venedig* however suggests a dual nature of the artistic experience by showing that Aschenbach's appreciation of beauty caused disintegration of his entire moral control, *Die Verwandlung* is not quite so condemnatory of music[63]. There are nevertheless signs of the re-emergence of chaos: immediately after this, Gregor has an incestuous fantasy about his sister[64]. His 'animal' instincts have been aroused. This, however, is not caused by his artistic experience but by a remanifestation of his essential personality, i.e., the fact that, despite his protestations, he is 'ein Tier'. Music is something temporary and fleeting. It can therefore only have a temporary, partial effect before returning the listener to the real world, and that real world is chaos. The search for order in art, as far as Kafka is concerned, is therefore at best only blessed with very limited success.

---

[60]Matthew 4:4, *The Holy Bible*, p. 967.

[61]Kafka, *Erzählungen*, pp. 58 & 76.

[62]See also Kuna, p. 56, and Christian Eschweiler, *Kafkas Erzählungen und ihr verborgener Hintergrund* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1991), p. 135.

[63]Politzer comments that music in Kafka 'almost exclusively signifies the invisible, and serves as a symbol of the perennially unattainable, the ineffable, and the unknowable' ('Franz Kafka's Language', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 8 (1962), 16), although the ambiguity of 'Nahrung' in the passage quoted suggests that the religious overtones of 'the ineffable' could be an exaggeration.

[64]Kafka, *Erzählungen*, pp. 98-9.

After love and eroticism, art is one of the most important themes in *La realidad y el deseo*, with many poems, especially in the later collections, devoted entirely to art or to artists. (Incidentally, unlike Mann or Kafka, Cernuda never creates fictional artist figures, but rather makes direct reference to real artists, such as Góngora and Mozart.) While much of this thesis has argued against the application of the over-simplifying Romantic or neo-Romantic 'tag', it must be admitted that it is in some of Cernuda's attitudes towards the nature of art and the artist that he is most overtly Romantic.

In the work of both Mann and Kafka, the chaos of daily life is a principal reason for seeking some kind of order in art and the artistic experience. Cernuda is no exception to this pattern. While Cernuda spent most of his life miserable and alienated, by the time of *Desolación de la Quimera*, he was resident predominantly in Mexico, and was rather happier than he had been earlier. Even then, however, he is quite specific that the artistic experience can be sought in response to the chaos which is normal existence. One of the poems of *Desolación de la Quimera* which speaks of this is 'Mozart', a eulogistic poem written in 1956, the bicentenary of the composer's birth. While we shall have cause later to analyse more of this poem in detail, it is relevant at this stage to concentrate on the opening lines of the third and final section of the poem:

> 'En cualquier urbe oscura, donde amortaja el humo
> Al sueño de un vivir urdido en la costumbre
> Y el trabajo no da libertad ni esperanza,
> Aún queda la sala del concierto, aún puede el hombre
> Dejar que su mente humillada se ennoblezca'[65]

It is striking how generalised these lines are. In contrast to *Buddenbrooks* and *Der Tod in Venedig*, there is no single, individual protagonist but rather 'el hombre' who is resident in 'cualquier urbe oscura'. The implication is thus that the musical experience is open to everyone. (Incidentally, it seems possible that the 'urbe oscura' is an echo of London in

---

[65]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 491.

the 1940s, where Cernuda attended concerts of Mozart's music[66].) The objective is however very similar to that of both Hanno Buddenbrook and Gregor Samsa, i.e., 'Dejar que su mente humillada se ennoblezca', in other words, find some kind of order in the chaos. It is interesting that in all three authors it is the experience of listening to music which is predominant. There seems to be something more captivating about music than any other art form[67]. What is more, the discordant notes of 'Rausch' (in *Buddenbrooks*) and incestuous eroticism (in *Die Verwandlung*) are not present in this poem. There is only a beneficial effect.

In both *Buddenbrooks* and *Der Tod in Venedig*, one of art's basic ingredients is seen to be primeval, 'Dionysian' chaos. The treatment of this idea is fairly Romantic in *Buddenbrooks*, but less so (and consequently more convincing) in *Der Tod in Venedig*. Cernuda, however, perhaps regrettably from an aesthetic point of view, treats this idea in a very Romantic fashion. This feels a little uneasy in the poem 'A un poeta muerto (F.G.L.)' from *Las Nubes*, which is devoted to poetry and the poet, and dates from 1937:

'Triste sino nacer
Con algún don ilustre
Aquí, donde los hombres
En su miseria sólo saben
El insulto, la mofa, el recelo profundo
Ante aquel que ilumina las palabras opacas
Por el oculto fuego originario.'[68]

The 'oculto fuego originario' is another way of talking about the nature of 'chaotic' poetic inspiration, which compares with 'el Caos primero' in 'Desolación de la

---

[66]Cernuda says in 'Historial de un libro':

> 'En Londres fue donde mejores ocasiones tuve para escuchar música; no olvido una serie de conciertos semanales dedicados a toda la música de cámara de Mozart.' (*Prosa I*, p. 649.)

See also José Carlos Ruiz Silva, 'En torno a un poema de Luis Cernuda: "Mozart"', *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, No. 316 (1976), 61-2, for further details of those concerts.

[67]George Steiner suggests in a similar vein that 'music and religious feeling' are 'virtually inseparable' (*Real Presences: Is There Anything in What We Say?* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), p. 216).

[68]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 255.

Quimera'[69]. This seems strange in a poem from 1937; these lines might not be out of place in a poem from 1837! Cernuda seems to be nostalgic for a past age, which echoes the very Romantic phase of *Invocaciones* and persists in his attitude to art, although less so towards other things, throughout his poetic career. Art, as far as Cernuda is concerned, consists of the dark forces of chaos which are then 'illuminated' by the poet; the poet seeks to give order to the chaos[70]. If we compare this with *Buddenbrooks* and *Der Tod in Venedig*, then it indicates the extent to which Cernuda has regressed towards conventional Romanticism. On the other hand, it becomes easier to be persuaded by Mann's work, for it demonstrates how much the twentieth century has remained in debt to the past.

Kafka deems the act of writing to be a 'süßer Lohn', but it is for

---

[69]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 530, also discussed below, p. 245. Silver interprets 'oculto fuego originario' purely as referring to 'love' (*Et in Arcadia Ego*, p. 109). Assuming it does refers to love *as well as* 'chaotic inspiration', this form of 'love' suggests a much more complex set of ideas than Silver's straightforward interpretation. The word 'oculto' especially is similar to Lorca's use of the phrase 'amor oscuro' in his *Sonetos del amor oscuro*. The following is the octet of the ninth sonnet of the series:

'¡Ay voz secreta del amor oscuro!
¡ay balido sin lanas! ¡ay herida!
¡ay aguja de hiel, camelia hundida!
¡ay corriente sin mar, ciudad sin muro!

¡Ay noche inmensa de perfil seguro,
montaña celestial de angustia erguida!
¡Ay perro en corazón, voz perseguida!
silencio sin confín, lirio maduro!'

(Federico García Lorca, *Selected Poems*, ed. & trans. Merryn Williams (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1992), p. 214.)

In its most general sense, 'amor oscuro' is homosexual love, suggested by the fact that the 'voz secreta del amor oscuro' is also a 'voz perseguida', as well as obviously being a source of pain in this sonnet. (See also Andrew A. Anderson, *Lorca's Late Poetry: A Critical Study* (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990), p. 376.) Anderson also argues however that the 'amor oscuro' in general terms 'is dark in that it has to do with the darker, murkier, Dionysian, side of the passions, passions which originate in the dark and mysterious depths of the soul' (p. 306). Given Cernuda's friendship with Lorca and the fact that this poem is dedicated to him, it is perfectly possible that the 'oculto fuego originario' is a reading (or mis-reading!) of Lorca's phrase, for the 'murkiness' and pain of love, together with homosexuality, have very obvious parallels in *La realidad y el deseo*. C.f. also Cernuda's poem 'Amor oculto', also from *Las nubes* (*Poesía completa*, pp. 308-9), which speaks of '[el] otro amor' which 'el mundo bajo insulta'.

[70]An idea which Cernuda found especially in Bécquer's poetry. See for example the third poem of *Rimas*, pp. 46-8.

'Teufelsdienst'[71]. It is interesting if we compare this with what Cernuda says regarding artistic creation. The stanza quoted above from 'A un poeta muerto' briefly mentions 'el insulto, la mofa, el recelo' of those people who do not understand the poetic art. Does the poet want glory but fail to receive it[72]? More important than this however are the following lines from the third last stanza of the poem:

'Para el poeta la muerte es la victoria;
Un viento demoníaco le impulsa por la vida,
Y si una fuerza ciega
Sin comprensión de amor
Transforma por un crimen
A ti, cantor, en héroe,
Contempla en cambio, hermano,
Cómo entre la tristeza y el desdén
Un poder más magnánimo permite a tus amigos
En un rincón pudrirse libremente.'[73]

The 'true' poet is portrayed in very grandiose terms: he is a romantic, heroic, almost superhuman figure. The 'viento demoníaco' is reminiscent of 'das Teuflische' in Kafka, and indeed goes far beyond Kafka, referring to a kind of supernatural power which only the poet has. It is in fact a little confusing in Cernuda's poetry. On the one hand there is the sense of something 'devilish'[74]. On the other hand, the poet is benefited by his act of creation; indeed this act is the only thing of worth he can do. In that sense then it is a finding of order. In addition, just as Kafka states that his devotion to writing has meant that he has never been alive to the world, so Cernuda says the poet is an outsider, even

---

[71]See above, p. 230.

[72]The need for recognition develops as a theme in Cernuda's poetry, especially in the poem 'A un poeta futuro', discussed below, p. 298ff.

[73]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 257.

[74]I am inclined to agree with Hughes when he says (*Luis Cernuda and the Modern English Poets*, p. 27) that these ideas are 'childish and outmoded'. The situation is however complicated by the fact that Cernuda thought of this 'supernatural power' in terms of the concept of a 'daimon' from Greek mythology, which, like love (see above, p. 202), can act as an intermediary between humanity and the gods. (See also Soufas, 'Cernuda and Daimonic Power', 170, Coleman, pp. 106 & 154, and Juan García Ponce, 'El camino del poeta: Luis Cernuda', in *Luis Cernuda ante la crítica mexicana*, ed. James Valender (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990), p. 82, for a further discussion of this topic.)

claiming that literal death, total escape from the world, is most appropriate for the poet[75]. Comparison with Kafka this time shows us how Romantic Cernuda's ideas are; by the same token, perhaps Kafka's less extreme version of this is lent greater credence.

In *Der Tod in Venedig*, 'ideal' art consists in chaotic inspiration given form by the artist. We have seen something of this idea in 'A un poeta muerto', when Cernuda refers to 'aquel que ilumina las palabras opacas'. The importance of form is stressed in 'El águila', from *Como quien espera el alba*. The larger part of this poem (the first two of three long stanzas) is devoted to evoking a scene of beauty and harmony, and is 'based on the myth of Zeus's love for Ganymede'[76]:

> 'Te descubrí, parejo al chopo tierno
> De esbelta plata verde estremecida
> Al viento matinal junto a la fuente,
> Jugando por los prados de la tierra.'[77]

The picture is a classical idyll, and the attraction of Zeus and Ganymede is serene and untroubled, and therefore reminiscent of poems such as 'Urania' in the same collection[78]. The final stanza is then devoted predominantly to the way in which 'Zeus and the poet he symbolises'[79] creates his own beautiful poem in response to this idyll. The following lines from the middle of this third stanza concentrate on the act of creation:

> '¿Es la hermosura,
> Forma carnal de una celesta idea,
> Hecha para morir? Vino de oro
> Que a dioses y poetas embriaga,
> Abriendo sueños vastos como el tiempo,

---

[75]We should also remember that, since Cernuda's society is hostile to the poet, then he is not at home in this world, exemplified vividly by the fact that Lorca, to whom this poem is dedicated, was killed at the beginning of the Civil War. See also Juan Gil Albert, 'Realidad y deseo en Luis Cernuda. Visión de un contemporáneo', in Jaime Gil de Biedma, Juan Gil Albert and Luis Antonio de Villena, *3 Luis Cernuda* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1977), p. 58.

[76]Silver, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, p. 36. See also Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 99.

[77]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 321.

[78]See above, p. 207.

[79]Silver, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, p. 37.

Quiero hacerla inmortal.'[80]

Aschenbach may well have sympathised with this sentiment: the desire to give permanent and beautiful expression to the beauty which the artist sees before him. The rôle of beauty in art is indeed paramount for Cernuda, together with the desire to give that beauty poetic form[81]. Furthermore, there is little to suggest a dual nature to beauty as there is in *Der Tod in Venedig*. There is nothing to indicate that it could cause any kind of moral collapse. It is entirely positive. Indeed there are Platonic reminiscences in the words 'Forma carnal de una celeste idea'. There is nonetheless something slightly discordant about the verb 'embriagar'. In a poem which stresses Platonic serenity, is there not something a little unsettling about a state of 'intoxication'? Is this not 'der Rausch'[82]? The poem *itself* then is the equivalent of Aschenbach's 'anderthalb Seiten erlesener Prosa': it is the 'embriaguez' after it has been directed towards poetic creation.

Kafka broaches in his diaries the idea that writing literature may be a means of guiding the writer upwards, towards absolute order. There is something of this in Cernuda's poetry. It is to be found most plainly in his homage to Larra, 'A Larra con unas violetas', in *Las nubes*. It is not insignificant that Cernuda has chosen a Romantic to whom he wishes to dedicate such a poem, for again these sorts of idea are indebted to Romanticism. The poem is elegiac in tone, and there is some space devoted to the poet's alienation from society, together with a caustic comment about the literary sterility of Spain[83]. Perhaps the most interesting lines are the closing lines of the poem:

'Es breve la palabra como el canto de un pájaro,
Mas un claro jirón puede prenderse en ella

---

[80]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 322-3.

[81]See also J. Luis Couso Cadahya, 'Búsqueda de lo absoluto en la poesía de Luis Cernuda', *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, No. 316 (1976), 37, or César Real Ramos, *Luis Cernuda y la 'Generación del 27'* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1983), p. 87.

[82]Quirarte, in the context of *Invocaciones*, argues that 'Cernuda encuentra la necesidad ... de exaltar la idea dionisíaca de la hermosura' (p. 87). Presumably it is in this sense of 'embriaguez' that Quirarte means this. To describe Cernuda's concept of beauty as always Dionysian is however to overlook the Platonic resonances in the poem, which are closer to the Apollonian pole. There is therefore still a tension, although it is not so pronounced as it is in *Der Tod in Venedig*.

[83]'Escribir en España no es llorar, es morir,' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 267).

De embriaguez, pasión, belleza fugitivas,
Y subir, ángel vigía que atestigua del hombre,
Allá hasta la región celeste e impasible.'[84]

Poetic creation is perceived as being able to guide the artist towards an appreciation of the divine. It is a form of art which is religious, almost mystical[85]. (If we compare this with Kafka, could it perhaps help us to see more clearly, while not blinding us to the ambiguity, the idea that 'das Reine, Wahre, Unveränderliche' could be something very similar to 'la región celeste'?) What is more, the very fact that 'la región celeste' is said also to be 'impasible' is a further indication of man's need to find transcendence. If he has failed to find it in religion, then it is not surprising that art is considered as a new religion. The only problem is the 'embriaguez' and 'pasión'. This once again suggests 'Rausch', but, similar to 'El águila', it is intoxication directed by 'la palabra'.

The preferred picture in *La realidad y el deseo* of the artist figure is of a 'man of synthesis', i.e., a man in whom order and chaos, and, indeed, all the conflicts and tensions of existence, are held together. Of particular note in this regard is 'El poeta y la bestia' from *Desolación de la Quimera*. This is Cernuda's picture of Goethe, and, interestingly, it takes essentially the same view as *Lotte in Weimar*, despite the fact that there is no evidence that Cernuda ever read Thomas Mann. The poem opens with a meditation on 'el hombre medio'. This is then contrasted with the figure of Goethe in the second stanza:

'En pocos hombres como en Goethe vemos
Coincidir y actuar dichosamente
Ayudados, y ayudándoles él, por tantas dotes
Que ilustra y equilibra un desarrollo
Tan vario como sabio y armonioso. A eso llama el hombre,
Sin conocer razón de así llamarlo: genio.'[86]

Like Thomas Mann, Cernuda concentrates, not on Goethe's writings, but on the man

---

[84]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 267.

[85]See further Coleman, p. 17, and Bruton, 'Symbolical Reference and Internal Rhythm: Luis Cernuda's Debt to Hölderlin', *Revue de littérature comparée*, 58 (1984), 44.

[86]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 518-9.

himself. Goethe's art is great because Goethe himself is a genius. The most crucial phrases in the description are 'Ayudados, y ayudándoles él' and 'ilustra y equilibra'. The first phrase demonstrates the fruitful interaction between man and world which is a sign of greatness (contrasting with the 'Triste sino' of being born a poet, according to 'A un poeta muerto', where total escape from the world is the only viable course). In the second phrase, the verb 'ilustrar' denotes the artist's power of creation, while 'equilibrar' points again towards the 'man of synthesis', whose very life is an achievement of order. As mentioned, however, this seems to be in conflict with the 'triste sino' of the poet expressed in earlier poetry. In 'El poeta y la bestia', Cernuda is talking about someone he considered greater than himself[87]. The first person plural 'vemos' in the first line quoted is an example that Cernuda is meditating on a different person. While, in 'A un poeta muerto' and many of the poems about artists[88], Cernuda compares himself with them, selecting the characteristics which most appeal, Cernuda in this poem does not think he is like Goethe. Goethe is rather a figure to be admired. The rest of the poem continues in similar terms, stressing also the fact that Goethe was far greater than the society around him ('la bestia'), although the closing section, when Cernuda meditates on Goethe's admiration of Napoleon, is rather weak. It is nevertheless significant for Cernuda's feelings about the greatness of the ideal artist.

While in 'El poeta y la bestia' there is an impression that the artist's life *ought* to be like Goethe's, Cernuda's own life as an artist appears somewhat different. Furthermore, there is a considerable degree of conflict with, and rejection by, the rest of society. As far as Cernuda is concerned, the negative side of the life of the artist (the 'decadent' side?) stems, first, from his relationship with society (or more accurately the lack of it). In his later poetry especially, Cernuda is very bitter about society's treatment of the artist. 'Limbo' for example, from *Con las horas contadas,* is an extremely sarcastic poem about 'dilettante' members of society who think they appreciate art, but do so very superficially[89]. '*Birds in the Night*' on the other hand, from *Desolación de la Quimera,*

---

[87]See also Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study,* p. 174.

[88]'Góngora' is another example. (Cernuda, *Poesía completa,* pp. 330-2.)

[89]Cernuda, *Poesía completa,* pp. 460-2.

expresses horror at society's deliberate 'mis-reading' of Rimbaud and Verlaine to make them more 'respectable' and acceptable to traditional values[90]. More interesting however is the title poem of this last collection *Desolación de la Quimera*[91]. The poem presents the chimæra, not simply as a strange mythological creature, but as a kind of poetic Muse, in whom mankind no longer believes[92]. The poem takes a very Romantic view of art, stressing the importance of the devilish powers and the 'Caos primero'[93]. It is the following, however, from the sixth stanza, which deals with the character of the modern poet himself which is of greatest import. (The chimæra itself is speaking):

> '»Flacos o fláccidos, sin cabellos, con lentes,
> Desdentados. Ésa es la parte física
> En mi tardío servidor; y, semejante a ella,
> Su carácter.«'[94]

The poet is feeble, pathetic and inadequate. (Presumably Cernuda is including himself in this[95].) He is the exact opposite of the Goethe figure, and there would appear to be little indication that he would be able to give order to the 'Caos primero'. While Cernuda's Goethe figure is similar to Mann's in *Lotte in Weimar*, the poet in 'Desolación de la Quimera' seems to be more the man of *disintegration*. Kafka's phrase that he 'ist nicht

---

[90]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 495-7. I am not however convinced that Cernuda ever wanted to reform society through his poetry, as Maximino Cacheiro seems to suggest:

> 'Cernuda ... se presenta como un sujeto portador de valores revelándolos a toda la sociedad para que cambie de rumbo.'

('La problemática del escrito en "La realidad y el deseo"', *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, No. 316 (1976), 56.)

He criticised society certainly, but I am not convinced he attempted to do very much more.

[91]The title of this poem and the collection is apparently derived from T. S. Eliot's *Little Gidding*, specifically the line 'The loud lament of the disconsolate Quimera [*sic*]' (Ortiz, 104).

[92]Is this perhaps almost a tentative admission that Cernuda's attitude towards poetry is (this poem dates from 1961) somewhat *passé*?

[93]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 530.

[94]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 529.

[95]In the poem 'Noche del hombre y su demonio' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 366-70), the 'demonio' accuses the 'hombre' (clearly Cernuda himself), of forgetting 'de estar vivo' (p. 367), because of his devotion to poetry, but Lorraine Ledford rightly stresses that the 'demonio' makes the man 'realize his personal strength', which is his poetry ('Cernuda's *demonio*: Devil or Divinity?', in *Essays in Honor of Jorge Guillén on the Occasion of his 85th Year*, no ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Abedul, 1977), p. 47): this in turn is reminiscent of Kafka's 'süßer Lohn' for his 'Teufelsdienst' (see above, p. 230).

einmal aus Staub'[96] would be entirely appropriate here. How could Cernuda's picture of this artist depart so radically from the image of an heroic figure whose creation could lead him towards God? Comparison with Kafka helps us to see two things: first, that such conflicting ideas can exist together in one artist. Second, and more important, without invalidating the artistic creation, Cernuda (unlike the genius Goethe) is totally alienated, and his life is no more than a collection of chaotic fragments.

We can now return to an analysis of the passive appreciation of a work, specifically music and the poem 'Mozart' from *Desolación de la Quimera*. Much of the poem is eulogistic in tone, extolling the great beauty and artistic merit of Mozart's music. Paramount are the virtues of harmony and order. Inevitably there is also some criticism of the society in which Mozart lived for its failure to appreciate his genius. In the second stanza of the second section, Mozart's music is said to have this effect:

'Toda razón su obra, pero siriviendo toda
Imaginación, en sí gracia y majestad une,
Ironía y pasión, hondura y ligereza.
Su arquitectura deshelada, formas líquidas
Da de desplendor inexplicable,'[97]

These lines are at the centre of the poem. This poem has a very regular structure, consisting of three sections of three stanzas each. It is fitting that the music should be in the centre. Of especial significance here is the series of contrasts which are said to be united in Mozart's music. Again it is the creation of order which is paramount. Furthermore, the music serves 'toda imaginación': it has a profound effect on each individual listener[98]. That effect is then explored in more detail in the second stanza of the third section:

'Si de manos de Dios informe salió el mundo,

---

[96]See above, p. 234.

[97]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 490.

[98]Incidentally, there would appear to be echoes in the phrase 'arquitectura deshelada' of Goethe's idea that 'die Baukunst' is 'eine erstarrte Musik' (Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*, ed. Fritz Bergmann (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1981), I, p. 307).

Trastornado su orden, su injusticia terrible;
Si la vida es abyecta y ruin el hombre,
Da esta música al mundo forma, orden, justicia,
Nobleza y hermosura. Su salvador entonces,
¿Quién es? Su redentor, ¿quién es entonces?
Ningún pecado en él, ni martirio, ni sangre.'[99]

These lines refer quite specifically to the effect on the *listener*[100]. It seems to be postulated here, blasphemously, that listening to music can actually repair the chaos of God's imperfect creation and redeem mankind[101]. In addition, all the attributes of this experience are specifically related to order and harmony, contrasting with all that is wrong with the real world. Listening to music is, therefore, for Cernuda, as for both Hanno Buddenbrook and Gregor Samsa, a particularly powerful, if not the ultimate, salve for the chaos of existence (although the *explicit* possibility of attaining the absolute is unique to Cernuda). In both Mann's and Kafka's writing there is however irony: Mann's suggests the Dionysian chaos of beauty, and the dangers of being too involved in such an experience, while Kafka's points to the temporary nature of the experience. Certainly in 'Mozart' there is no suggestion that there is a danger of the music causing chaos, but the opening of this final section makes it plain that the individual has to escape from the world to hear this music: 'Aún queda la sala del concierto'. Cernuda is aware that it is temporary[102], removed from the outside world, and not life itself[103]. Art is sought in

---

[99]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 491.

[100]Silver argues that these lines 'confer a transcendental importance upon the *creators* of art' (my emphasis) (*Et in Arcadia Ego*, p. 180), but the stress is on the music more than on Mozart: 'Da esta *música*...'.

[101]Jiménez-Fajardo is not wrong to speak of 'the potential to discover one's lasting essence', but this does obscure the religious overtones (*Luis Cernuda*, p. 139). Schärer makes the interesting point that 'la obra de arte se encuentra siempre *al margen de* la divinidad' ('Luis Cernuda y el reflejo', in *Luis Cernuda*, ed. Harris, p. 323), although I am inclined to think that the stress is rather more on music as the medium rather than on where it might lie in some 'cosmic scheme'. See also Mario E. Ruiz, 'La angustia como origen de *la realidad* y manifestación *del deseo* en Luis Cernuda', *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, 5 (1971), 356.

[102]I believe Octavio Paz largely overlooks this transient nature of the artistic experience. ('La palabra edificante', in *Cuadrivio*, 2nd ed. (México: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, 1969), p. 201).

[103]The fact that music is only temporary is reiterated in another poem from *Desolación de la Quimera*, 'Luis de Baviera escucha *Lohengrin*', which speaks of music as a means to help the individual discover more of himself and his identity. The last sentence reads 'Y para siempre en la música vive' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 517), with the clear implication that this self-affirmation will end along with the last dying chords.

response to the chaos, but the end of the experience signifies the beginning of chaos. In general terms, then, Cernuda brings together different strands of thought in both Mann's and Kafka's writing. Is *their* writing therefore not but two sides of the same coin? .

Section B:

The Practice of Art

Part I:

The Disintegration of Meaning:

The Advent of Literary Chaos?

Franz Kafka

In the following analysis of the way Mann, Kafka and Cernuda create literary order, the complexity of the topic is such that it is necessary to subdivide it into a comparison, first, between Kafka and Cernuda, and then between Mann and Cernuda, before attempting to achieve some kind of synthesis of ideas. Beginning with Kafka, a considerable proportion of criticism has given prominence to an analysis of his literary style. Given the enigmatic nature of Kafka's prose, the attempts to categorise and define it have lead to a bewildering array of theories, with little agreement between critics. Heller defines Kafka's 'images'[104] as 'symbols' rather than 'allegories'[105], while we have also the various definitions of 'literal metaphors'[106], 'extended metaphors'[107] and even 'metamorphosed metaphors'[108] and many others[109]. Too often this has embroiled us in a discussion of semantics which becomes ever more obscure and ever less directly relevant to Kafka's literary output. It is not the aim of the present study to confuse this issue further with yet another attempt to define the nature of Kafka's imagery even more precisely (or imprecisely!). Rather it is the issue of meaning itself which is of interest, both the nature of the meaning of Kafka's work and the extent to which meaning actually becomes an issue in that work.

Jacques Derrida, the 'father' of Post-Structuralist criticism, argues that words could only be deemed to be inherently 'meaningful' at a time when meaning was

---

[104]The word 'image' for Kafka's castle, court, penal colony, etc., seems the most neutral available, given the wide controversy over terminology.

[105]Erich Heller, *Kafka*, p. 116. Ralph Freedman takes the opposite view, arguing further that 'the "allegory" is ... molded by deliberate distortions' ('Kafka's Obscurity: The Illusion of Logic in Narrative', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 8 (1962), 71).

[106]Günther Anders, *Franz Kafka*, trans. A. Steer and A. K. Thorlby (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1960), p. 42ff.

[107]Sokel, *The Writer in Extremis: Expressionism in Twentieth Century Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 46.

[108]Stanley Corngold, *Franz Kafka, passim*.

[109]See for example Martin Greenberg, who very even-handedly says that (p. 217):

> 'The more or less psychological symbols of the dream story are charged, in *The Castle*, with a weight of generalizing thought that gives them a peculiar allegorical quality, without their ceasing to be symbols.'

'guaranteed', as it were, by what he calls 'an invariable presence ... transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth'[110]. Modern society has however lost this 'center or origin', and this extends 'the domain and the play of signification infinitely'[111]. As George Steiner (himself not an adherent of Post-Structuralist theory) puts it, 'signs are made recognizable and significant by sole virtue of their differences ... from other signs'[112]. In other words, what Derrida in the first place, and Post-Structuralism in the second, has taught us is a way of perceiving language and meaning as something imprecise and fluid, rather than well-defined.

How could this apply to Kafka's aesthetics? Without in any way adhering to a specific linguistic-philosophical standpoint, Kafka has considerable anxiety about the nature and especially the *reliability* of language and meaning. Kessler sets this in a context of a general trend amongst literary writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries[113]. In particular, she draws attention, with good reason, to the following aphorism (number 57):

> 'Die Sprache kann für alles außerhalb der sinnlichen Welt nur andeutungsweise, aber niemals auch nur annähernd vergleichsweise gebraucht werden, da sie, ensptrechend der sinnlichen Welt, nur vom Besitz und seinen Beziehungen handelt.'[114]

This aphorism has no single, straightforward interpretation. For Kessler, it is the question of Kafka's portrayal of the 'sinnlichen Welt' which is paramount[115]. Corngold meanwhile is more concerned with 'the more genuine mode of using language *andeutungsweise*'[116]. Both of these interpretations are certainly justifiable. We can add that if Kafka uses language 'andeutungsweise', then he must be talking about what lies 'außerhalb der

---

[110]Jacques Derrida, 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences', trans. Alan Bass, in Lodge, p. 110.

[111]Derrida, in Lodge, p. 110.

[112]George Steiner, p. 122.

[113]Kessler, especially pp. 5-23.

[114]Kafka, *Hochzeitsvorbereitungen*, p. 34.

[115]Kessler, see especially pp. 159-60.

[116]Corngold, *Franz Kafka*, p. 37.

sinnlichen Welt'[117]. What is unquestionable is that, for Kafka, language is an inadequate medium, and nothing can guarantee that he will be able to express precisely what he wants to express. This idea is explored further in the following diary entry from the 15th of December, 1912:

> 'Kein Wort fast, das ich schreibe, paßt zum andern, ich höre, wie sich die Konsonanten blechern aneinanderreiben, und die Vokale singen dazu ... Meine Zweifel stehn um jedes Wort im Kreis herum,'[118]

Kafka's critique of language concerns first of all the lack of connection between the words that he uses: there is no cohesion, no universal semantic order into which individual words can fit and be bound together. The possibility of expression is therefore minimised. This critique is however taken further, extending to the individual words themselves. In isolation they disintegrate yet further into disparate consonantal and vocalic sounds, devoid of all signification. Kafka even goes to the extent of claiming that he has manifold doubts about each and every word. While this may well be somewhat hyperbolic, nevertheless the semantic problems are of crucial importance to an understanding of Kafka's aesthetics: they postulate the disintegration of meaning, which can only signal the advent of literary chaos.

How does this apply to Kafka's literary output? If we concentrate on *Das Schloß*, then it is appropriate to consider first of all the 'meaning' of the central image of the castle. Kafka's critique of language demonstrates that the author himself would not be prepared to vouch for any single, undisputed signification. This presents us with a problem. Has our endeavour to demonstrate some basic symbolical framework for the text been misguided? Corngold, indeed, at times comes close to suggesting a Post-Structuralist 'abyss of non-meaning'[119]. The title of *Das Schloß* however could not be

---

[117]See also Sokel, 'Language and Truth in the Two Worlds of Franz Kafka', in *Franz Kafka*, ed. Bloom, p. 180, Werner Hoffmann, *Kafkas Aphorismen* (Bern: Francke, 1975), p. 100, and Richard T. Gray, 'Suggestive Metaphor: Kafka's Aphorisms and the Crisis of Communication', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 58 (1984), 459, although Gray argues that Kafka is concerned with transcendence within Kafka's own mind.

[118]Kafka, *Tagebücher*, p. 22. Kessler quotes this passage and a number of others in a similar vein (p. 159).

[119]For example, 'The chiasm is constructed to be hermeneutically endless' (Corngold, *Franz Kafka*, p. 157,

more simple. Unlike some of the earlier works, where the titles refer more to events[120], the word 'Schloß' refers to something concrete and visible. Therefore, from our perspectives as readers embarking upon the novel, the word is inherently more precise. We have definite expectations of what a 'castle'[121] should be like. In other words, we expect a simple and straightforward connection between signifier ('Schloß') and signified ('large stone building, possibly turrets, parapets, etc.'[122]). We can assume too that K.'s expectations are broadly similar[123], but when he first attempts to reach it, we read the following:

> 'Aber im Näherkommen enttäuschte ihn das Schloß, es war doch nur ein recht elendes Städtchen, aus Dorfhäusern zusammengetragen, ausgeziechnet nur dadurch, daß vielleicht alles aus Stein gebaut war;'[124]

The castle is not a 'castle' in a conventional sense at all[125]. In linguistic terms, the signifier does *not* correlate with the signified in the manner which we had expected.

---

and 'Restoring the Image of Death: On Death and the Figure of Chiasm in Kafka', *Journal of the Kafka Society of America*, 9 (1985), 60). P. S. Di Virgilio seems to be tending in this direction when he says that the first paragraph of *Das Schloß* 'represents the last instant of integrity for the sign before the onslaught of the dialogue of complementarity with the symbol, K.' ('In Search of Deep Semiotic Structures: The Genesis of *Das Schloß*', *Language and Style*, 19 (1986), 321). Jörgen Kobs even postulates that 'die *Entscheidung* [my emphasis] zwischen positivem Sinn und Sinnlosigkeit' is 'in der Schwebe' (*Kafka: Untersuchungen zu Bewußtsein und Sprache seiner Gestalten*, ed. Ursula Brech (Bad Homburg: Athenäum, 1970), p. 19), while Rosmarie Zeller claims that the reader 'wird zu Interpretationen verleitet' and as a result 'alle möglichen Interpretationen [werden] von vornherein zum Scheitern [verurteilt] ('Advokatenkniffe: Die Thematisierung von Textproduktion und Interpretation im Werk Kafkas', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 106 (1987), 576).

[120]For example, *Das Urteil*, *Die Verwandlung*, *Der Prozeß*.

[121]'Schloß' can also mean 'lock' (which is not irrelevant in the context of the imagery of the novel as a whole, for K. is 'locked out') (see also Robert, p. 155), but again this is something physical, concrete. At the outset of the story, however, it is made explicit that 'castle' is the *physical* entity to which 'Schloß' is intended to refer.

[122]Bernheimer argues that '"castle" has an intertextual history that associates it with numerous images, both historical and literary, of power, inviolability, authority, magic, mysticism, romance, fairies, and ghosts. These images ... suggest a whole library of narrative plots' (*Flaubert and Kafka*, p. 200). I should however contend that such resonances are secondary to the central physical image of a 'large stone building'.

[123]From the distance, it 'entsprach ... K.s Erwartungen' and it is 'weder eine alte Ritterburg noch ein neuer Prunkbau, sondern eine ausgedehnte Anlage' (Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 13).

[124]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 13.

[125]See also Peter Benson, 'Entering *The Castle*', *Journal of Narrative Technique*, 23 (1993), 86.

Thus, from the outset, the language that is used cannot be relied upon absolutely. This clearly has serious implications for the novel as a whole, because what is at issue here is the central image of the entire novel. If the physical appearance of the castle does not fall within the limitations which are conventionally imposed by the word 'Schloß', then the task of ascertaining what it represents is made far harder. If the novel lacks a conventional literal framework, then is it possible for it to possess a conventional 'symbolic' framework? Before even embarking upon the story proper, the process of interpretation is threatened by linguistic chaos.

Does the novel possess a conventional symbolic framework? In chapter II of this study, the reasons for viewing the castle as a goal of 'absolute order' were explored. If a symbolic framework is totally absent, then clearly such an interpretation must be rendered quite invalid, but it is not so simple. What is evident in this novel is the existence of various echoes, clues and suggestions which point towards certain interpretations. The traditional, Brod-influenced theological interpretation of the castle as an image of the divine rests largely upon its evident authority, its apparent infallibility and the use of theological terminology[126]. All of these things are suggestive rather than directly indicative. They are like the pieces of a jigsaw, but they do not fit together to form a complete picture, only a very partial one. The 'holes' in the picture deny us the ability to draw definitive conclusions[127].

It is worth remembering that, running alongside the 'positive' imagery related to the castle, there is a strand of contradictory 'negative' imagery: the Sortini episode, the mysterious crows which swarm around the castle, the indifference of the castle and even

---

[126]For example, 'Im Namen Klamms' (Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 42), 'der Wille Klamms' (p. 53), etc. See above, p. 97ff, for the full discussion.

[127]Heinz Hillmann, discussing *Amerika*, postulates the similar idea that 'the production of literature is understood as a problem-solving game' ('*Amerika*: Literature as a Problem-Solving Game', in Flores, p. 296). Ultimately however there can be no single solution to the problems which Kafka presents. Thomas Mueller also discusses the notion of 'Spiel' and contends, not without justification, that Kafka 'versucht ... die Leser zu täuschen' ('Aspekte des Spiels bei Kafka', *Seminar*, 24 (1988), 29), although I am not convinced that this is *always* the case. (If it were, then there would unquestionably be a situation of 'hermeneutic endlessness'.)

the active hostility of some of its representatives[128]. Once more, however, these things are only suggestive. They too are like the pieces of a jigsaw; but, not only do they not fit together to form a complete picture, they are actually pieces of a *different* jigsaw! The interpreter thus lacks any clear 'symbolic' line. The most important pieces of the jigsaws, the ones which would point definitively to one thing or another, are missing. In Derrida's terms, there would appear to be no 'center or origin'[129]. Bernheimer takes precisely this view when he says that, 'The symbol-hunting critics reveal their nostalgia, similar to K.'s, for a lost world bound together by a language of felt analogies'[130]. It is not as simple as this either however. The 'pieces' that are there cannot be ignored. Their symbolic resonance is still there.

Are other elements of the text demonstrative of a 'symbolic' interpretation or of an anarchic Post-Structuralist 'non-interpretation'? Kafka's use of proper names has direct application to his use of language. Perhaps the most obvious feature of the proper name is the fact that the name is only a label which logically cannot have any direct correlation with the person who bears it. Traditionally, of course, names have often been seen as significant: in the Bible, a change of status was frequently 'confirmed', as it were, by a change of name[131]. By the same token, it has been common in critical literature to look for significance in Kafka's names, the similarity of Franz Kafka and Georg Bendemann of *Das Urteil* for example often having been pointed out[132]. Mark Anderson however remarks that, in *Das Schloß*, 'Klamm' suggests various meanings[133], and then

---

[128]See above, p. 98ff.

[129]See above, p. 252.

[130]Charles Bernheimer, 'Symbolic Bond and Textual Play: Structure of *The Castle*', in Flores, p. 383. He then develops this idea in his later monograph, suggesting that Kafka's text 'articulates ... a middle or medium sphere of suspended significance ... the metatext is *meta* in that it is structured as a dramatization of the conflict between the psychopoetic orientations that constitute it.' (*Flaubert and Kafka*, p. 51.) What Bernheimer is again articulating is the lack of universal valid terms of reference which may be applied to Kafka's writing.

[131]For example, Abram to Abraham, Genesis 17:5, because, God says, 'I have made you a father of many nations' (*The Holy Bible*, p. 17). See further J. M. Y. Simpson, *A First Course in Linguistics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1979), pp. 3-5.

[132]Including by Kafka himself. See his letter to Felice Bauer of the 2nd of June, 1913. (*Briefe an Felice und andere Korrespondenz aus der Verlobungszeit*, ed. Erich Heller and Jürgen Born (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1976), p. 394.)

[133]'... Klamm (which in German can mean "rocky gorge", "clammy", "frozen", in Czech "illusion" or

contends that 'an interpretation of the name "Klamm" ... is *only a reading of the name "Klamm", not the character Klamm*'[134]. To what extent is this argument true of names in the novel in general?

It is difficult to draw conclusions about Klamm's name, for we have no concrete evidence about his character. Frieda and Barnabas, however, have a physical presence. The similarity between Frieda and the word 'Friede' is obvious, but to what extent is she 'peaceful'? K.'s comment at the end of the novel[135] suggests this quality, and she is certainly more serene than the belligerent K. Her overt sexuality does *not* however fit comfortably with this. The same can be said of the way she shouts and commands the men in the 'Herrenhof', and also of her obvious hatred of Olga and her family[136]. The name Barnabas, meanwhile, means 'son of consolation'[137], but, while Barnabas delivers 'favorable messages'[138], Politzer argues that 'these messages ... have also turned out to be malicious specimens of Klamm's peculiar sense of humor'[139]. Thus there are names which are simultaneously apparently significant and apparently insignificant. While Grimes is right to point out that it is a matter of artistic merit to have 'every symbol ... demand[ing] more than one interpretation'[140], this is not sufficient. Names in *Das Schloß* are revealed as not being entirely symbolic: the name (the 'signifier') does not correlate exactly with the person (the 'signified'). At the same time however they are not entirely meaningless either: there is some evidence for correlation between name and character as far as Frieda and Barnabas are concerned. Again, it is an incomplete jigsaw.

"falsehood" ...' (Mark Anderson, 'Kafka and the Place of the Proper Name', *Journal of the Kafka Society of America*, 9 (1985), 6).

[134]Mark Anderson, 6.

[135]'»... Friedas Ruhe, ... Friedas Sachlichkeit«' (Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 291).

[136]Lida Kirchberger only sees the 'peaceful' side of Frieda's character, arguing that both she and Olga are 'peace loving or even saintly' (*Franz Kafka's Use of Law in Fiction: A New Interpretation of* In der Strafkolonie, Der Prozess, *and* Das Schloss (New York: Lang, 1986), p. 179).

[137]Politzer, *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox*, p. 263. For further possible interpretations of this, and other, names in the novel, see Elizabeth M. Rajec, *Namen und ihre Bedeutungen im Werk Franz Kafkas: Ein interpretatorischer Versuch* (Bern: Lang, 1977), pp. 152-72, although she tends to assume that Kafka's names are inherently meaningful.

[138]Politzer, *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox*, p. 263.

[139]Politzer, *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox*, p. 263.

[140]Margaret Grimes, 'Kafka's Use of Cue-Names: Its Importance for an Interpretation of *The Castle*', *Centennial Review*, 18 (1974), 227.

Kafka's general style of writing in *Das Schloß* is also crucial to this argument. Kafka usually writes with a taut simplicity, but, while this is true of the earlier parts of the novel, it seems to change later in the long conversations between K. and Olga and then K. and Pepi. Gray is particularly critical of this part of the novel. When commenting upon the way in which, in the later part of the novel, 'nothing can be said without a concession to a possible different point of view'[141], he states:

> 'Writing like this ... is simply inchoate, tedious, and only to be understood on the grounds that Kafka himself did not wish it to be published, had not revised it, and thought (however ambiguously) that it deserved only to be burned.'[142]

While it would be somewhat misguided to suggest that *Das Schloß* is aesthetically not without its defects, such a powerful condemnation is too extreme, and, if nothing else, raises the question, 'Why bother study it at all?' Let us consider the following passage from K.'s and Olga's conversation in chapter fifteen:

> 'Diese zwei Briefe, die durch des Barnabas Hand bisher gegangen sind, sind seit drei Jahren das erste, allerdings noch genug zweifelhafte Gnadenzeichen, das unsere Familie bekommen hat. Diese Wendung, wenn es eine Wendung ist und keine Täuschung — Täuschungen sind häufiger als Wendungen —, ist mit deiner Ankunft hier im Zusammenhang, unser Schicksal ist in eine gewisse Abhängigkeit von dir geraten, vielleicht sind diese zwei Briefe nur ein Anfang,'[143]

It must be admitted that, with so much of the latter part of the novel written in this style, there is a degree to which this lack of definite assertion can become wearisome. The question is the extent to which such a response is justified. Granted all novels should engage the reader's interest (a boring novel usually remains unread), but it seems at least plausible that ideas about the nature of meaning itself are being articulated in passages such as these. Statement and negation (or partial negation) are continually being

---

[141]Ronald Gray, *Franz Kafka* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 157.

[142]Ronald Gray, *Franz Kafka*, p. 157.

[143]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 217.

juxtaposed. In the first place, this means that nothing is definite, or, to put it more precisely, nothing here is definite for *Olga*, for it is after all Olga who is speaking, not the narrator. Gray himself in fact states that 'Words are for her often ciphers with no particular meaning'[144]. More than this, however, it would appear that such a continual turmoil of contradictions is a deliberate experimentation with language. It is being taken to its very limits in order to see just how much it can actually bear[145]. Ultimately the words start to take on a kind of mesmeric quality, blurring together incoherently: we become locked in the same semantic trap as Olga herself, actively expecting a concessive word or phrase or an outright negation to accompany every statement that is being made. This inevitably lends the meaning of these passages a very fluid, imprecise quality. In Derrida's terms, there is no 'center or origin' here, but instead a continual groping which effectively 'deconstructs' the words altogether: we all but lose all point of contact, and the result is signifier after signifier after signifier, with the signified themselves but a confused memory. Language and literature *appear* to be degenerating into chaos.

Is Kafka's thesis then that meaning has *totally* disintegrated? It was stressed above that Olga was speaking in the last quotation and not the narrator. This is a key factor which must not be overlooked. After that quotation, Olga's monologue rambles on for well over another page. After she finishes however, the narrator breaks in with the almost unsettlingly abrupt sentence 'Es klopfte'[146]. The entire paragraph of which that is the opening sentence lasts only one and a half lines. *The narrator is still in control.* While the extent of this control varies and the narrative pace is not always shifted as dramatically as this, nevertheless it does introduce a second, startlingly clear perspective[147]. There is no ambiguity whatsoever in this sentence and the two which

---

[144]Ronald Gray, *Franz Kafka*, p. 155.

[145]Peter-André Alt argues in general terms that this sort of writing, where there is a continual interplay of statement and negation, is 'eine doppelte Schrift, die vordergründig ihre eigene Unmöglichkeit beklagt' ('Doppelte Schrift, Unterbrechung und Grenze: Franz Kafkas Poetik des Unsagbaren im Kontext der Sprachskepsis um 1900', *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft*, 29 (1985), 457).

[146]Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 219.

[147]Binder comments further on Kafka's attention to detail, remarking that, before K.'s interview with Bürgel, he is tired and desires a 'Schlaftrunk', which he finds in the form of 'eine kleine Karaffe Rum' ('Kafkas literarische Urteile: Ein Beitrag zu seiner Typologie und Ästhetik', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 86 (1967), 236-7, and Kafka, *Das Schloß*, p. 242). The fact that K. then spends most of his

follow it[148]. Kafka's narrative has thus pushed language and meaning to their very limits, but then it sharply moves back to safer territory. This demonstrates that at least some kind of meaning is still available.

It is in the light of this that we can consider once more the points already discussed and come to a rather more precise understanding of the nature of meaning in *Das Schloß*. It was stated that the castle does not live up to K.'s (or our) expectations and is not effectively a castle in any conventional sense of the word at all. It is nevertheless *still something*! There is no *void* but rather something *different*[149]. Similarly, when we looked at the symbolic framework, we could trace two incomplete 'pictures' of what the castle might represent. While incomplete, the symbolic resonance is still there. As far as proper names are concerned, the correlation between the meaning of the name and the person's character is only partial, but there is nevertheless some correlation. When talking in more general terms (not specifically of Kafka) about 'prose fiction', Corngold says that it 'unsettles conventional patterns of signs'[150]. It would seem that it is this sort of process which is at work in *Das Schloß*. There is certainly not a guaranteed semantic permanence.

---

interview asleep is clearly a logical progression from this. Such attention to detail again suggests a carefully organised narrative, where some kind of logic is still operating.

[148]While I do not wish to become embroiled in the vexed question of narrative perspective in Kafka's writing, it is worth mentioning that Yoseph Milman argues cogently that the narrator's reliability is variable ('The Ambiguous Point of View and Reader Involvement in Kafka: A Reader Oriented Approach to *The Castle* and "In the Penal Colony"', *Neophilologus*, 77 (1993), 265). (The very fact that he is able to establish this is evidence in itself that there is still a hold on meaning.) For further evidence of an identifiable narrative 'voice', see Nutting, 606, and von Abrams, p. 215ff. Joseph Vogl on the other hand argues that, since the narrative perspective is variable, 'Zwischen Erzähltem und Erzählung gibt es keine Instanz der Vermittlung' ('Vierte Person. Kafkas Erzählstimme', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 68 (1994), 751). What is more important here however is not whether or not narrative 'distance' may or may not always be 'determinable', but rather the fact that the narrator has here interrupted Olga's monologue and is thus demonstrating that, if that monologue has become meaningless, that is no reason to infer that the text as a whole is meaningless.

[149]Richard Murphy argues that the images of the 'Ungeziefer', 'Schloß', 'Prozeß', etc., 'reveal ... [a] central semantic vacuum' ('Semiotic Excess, Semantic Vacuity and the Photograph of the Imaginary: The Interplay of Realism and the Fantastic in Kafka's *Die Verwandlung*', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 65 (1991), 316). From what we have been arguing here perhaps 'area of semantic indeterminacy' would be more accurate. As Christiane Schulz comments, Kafka's language has 'eine neue, eigene Semantik' (*Der Schreibprozeß bei Thomas Mann und Franz Kafka und seine didaktischen Implikationen* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1985), p. 200).

[150]Corngold, *Franz Kafka*, p. 170.

Kafka does however tell us enough to let us see that there are gaps between signifier and signified, but he will do no more than point us in certain directions. Ultimately the choice of interpretation is left to us as readers, but there is still sufficient ground in the text to tell us that there genuinely *is* something there to interpret. There is still a *sign* (however ambiguous) of a more permanent, secure order.

Luis Cernuda

While Kafka is a highly enigmatic writer, the critical literature on Cernuda has generally started from the premise that his poetry is basically 'comprehensible'. The only real area of linguistic obscurity in Cernuda's poetry is to be found in his two Surrealist-influenced collections, *Un río, un amor* and *Los placeres prohibidos*[151]. Morris has demonstrated convincingly the considerable extent to which the ideas of the French Surrealists, the pioneers in the movement, were current in Spain in the 1920s[152]. There is however no space for an in-depth analysis of Surrealism. What is crucial is that Freud's analysis of the sub-conscious was very influential in Surrealist circles[153], and that Surrealist poetry sought to give literary expression to that subconscious[154]. André Breton and Paul Éluard, for example, two very prominent French Surrealists, said that 'Un poème doit être une débâcle de l'intellect'[155]. The Surrealist technique of 'automatic writing' in particular was concerned with writing down thoughts and emotions as 'spontaneously' as possible[156]. Characteristic of Surrealist poetry therefore is a collection of elements which seem to have little organising logic and structure. One of Spanish literature's foremost Surrealists is Vicente Aleixandre. To take an arbitrary example, the poem 'Eterno secreto' from *La destrucción o el amor* may be said to typify Surrealist technique. The theme of the poem would appear to be failed love, or the end of a love affair. The poem opens thus:

> 'La celeste marca del amor en un campo desierto
> donde hace unos minutos lucharon dos deseos,
> donde todavía por el cielo un último pájaro se escapa,

---

[151]I can see little justification in Capote Benot's insistence that *Donde habite el olvido* is a collection of Surrealist poetry (pp. 197-233). The sheer inaccuracy of this claim he himself is forced to admit at the conclusion of his study (p. 242):

> 'Si en los dos libros anteriores encontramos un surrealismo patente ... en *Donde habite el olvido* la huella de dicha tendencia es casi imperceptible.'

[152]C. B. Morris, *Surrealism and Spain 1920-1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), *passim.* See also Delgado, pp. 121-151.

[153]Morris, p. 36.

[154]See for example Real Ramos, *Luis Cernuda*, p. 37.

[155]Quoted in Morris, p. 1.

[156]See also Ruiz Silva, *Arte, amor y otras soledades en Luis Cernuda* (Madrid: De la Torre, 1979), p. 31.

caliente pluma que unas manos han retenido.'[157]

Apart from the 'caliente plumas', the sense of barren desolation is fairly clear. Perhaps the most Surrealist part of this poem is the last two stanzas:

'¡Luna cuajante fría que a los cuerpos darías calidad de cristal!
Que a las almas darías apariencia de besos;
en un bosque de palmas, de palomas dobladas,
de picos que se traman como las piedras inmóviles.

¡Luna, luna, sonido, metal duro o temblor:
ala, pavoroso plumaje que rozas un oído,
que musitas la dura cerrazón de los cielos,
mientras mientes un agua que parece la sangre!'[158]

Surrealist poetry is a poetry of pictures, shifting dramatically from one image to another. The problem for the reader is that it can be difficult to establish meaningful connections between these 'pictures', and there can appear to be more of a capricious jumble of concepts than a coherent poem. This can at times make the poetry appear obscure to the point of being almost impenetrable. In this poem for example, the last two lines of the penultimate stanza are a breathless jumble of incoherent images, designed to give an impression of the love relationship. Individual images (e.g., 'palomas dobladas') can however at times be well-nigh impossible to interpret.

The idea of Surrealist obscurity does not fit particularly comfortably with a Post-Structuralist concept such as the 'disintegration of meaning', which is based on a linguistic-philosophical standpoint. An incoherent jumble of words and concepts must also be far away from the very deliberate artistic strategy which we have already argued is at work in *Das Schloß*. Turning to Cernuda's Surrealist poetry, the first thing that must be borne in mind is that Cernuda was his 'own poet'. While in his earliest poetry of the 1920s and early 1930s he was heavily influenced by literary fashions, he did not jump on

---

[157]Vicente Aleixandre, *Obras completas* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1968), p. 375.

[158]Aleixandre, p. 376.

literary 'band-wagons' purely for their own sake[159]. There were poetic goals, conscious or unconscious, which were at work in his adherence to Surrealism. In addition to the literary goal, French Surrealists often rebelled against society, and this attracted the young Cernuda. He also desired to give spontaneous expression to deep-rooted emotions. While there are clearly Surrealist elements in *Un río, un amor* and *Los placeres prohibidos*[160], it is worthwhile to set these well-studied matters aside. There was an extent to which Cernuda had a certain anxiety about the nature of language and meaning themselves. He makes an interesting comment in his short theoretical essay 'Palabras antes de una lectura':

> '¿cómo expresar con palabras cosas que son inexpresables? Las palabras están vivas, y por lo tanto traicionan; lo que expresan hoy como verdadero y puro, mañana es falso y está muerto. Hay que usarlas contando con su limitación,'[161]

This is more than a mere restatement of the cliché that language is inadequate to express exactly what we feel. What is at issue is a sense that the poet is unable to exercise absolute and final control over the language that he uses. Nothing can ensure that the words on a page will have exactly the signification that the poet would impart to them. As we have already observed in more extreme form with Kafka, his work does not have semantic permanence. 'Palabras antes de una lectura' was written by Cernuda in 1935. By this time he was writing his sixth collection *Invocaciones* and had already effectively abandoned the Surrealist mode of writing altogether. A critique of language and meaning was however already present, perhaps even more radically so, in his Surrealist poetry, and more especially in *Un río, un amor*, which is the more overtly 'Surrealist' of the two. It

---

[159]As Carlos Marcial de Onís comments, 'sólo tomó del surrealismo aquello que mejor pudiera servir a sus necesidades expresivas' (*El surrealismo y cuatro poetas de la generación del 27* (Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas, 1974), p. 213). Cernuda himself was fairly reticent in the way he expressed his affiliation to Surrealism: in 'Historial de un libro', he says that Surrealism was 'una corriente ... ante la cual yo no pude, ni quise, permanecer indiferente', while the first three poems of *Un río, un amor* were 'dictados por un impulso *similar* al que animaba a los superrealistas' (my emphasis) (Cernuda, *Prosa I*, p. 634).

[160]See for example 'Estoy cansado', where the only logic in the first and third lines of the second stanza 'Estoy cansado de las casas', 'Estoy cansado de las cosas' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 152) would appear to be the phonological similarity.

[161]Cernuda, *Prosa I*, p. 605.

may well be that such a critique proves to be of rather more benefit to an analysis of *that* collection than of his later poetry[162].

In *Un río, un amor*, the fluid nature of meaning can be seen very well in 'Vieja ribera'. This poem is primarily about 'la nostalgia por la pérdida de la niñez'[163]. The first stanza looks back to that world of childhood:

'Tanto ha llovido desde entonces,
Entonces, cuando los dientes no eran carne, sino días
Pequeños como un río ignorante
A sus padres llamando porque siente sueño,'[164]

The somewhat elegiac first line 'Tanto ha llovido desde entonces' sets the mood for the whole poem. The impression of sadness and desolation (typical of the collection) is continued throughout the poem. The second stanza is however worthy of consideration in greater detail:

'Unos dicen que sí, otros dicen que no;
Mas sí y no son dos alas pequeñas,
Equilibrio de un cielo dentro de otro cielo,
Como un amor está dentro de otro,
Como el olvido está dentro del olvido.'[165]

The misery and meaninglessness of the persona's present existence (contrasting starkly with the long-gone life of childhood) are obvious. The second line does however suggest a further significance. The 'alas pequeñas' seem to offer no link either with 'sí y no' or with anything else in the poem. The comparison seems completely arbitrary, but this, I

---

[162]Cernuda had already made a similar statement about language in 1929 about Éluard's poetry:

> 'Y si [la poesía] necesita de [las palabras], esas palabras son ya ciertamente muy distintas, bien que, como las otras, como todas las palabras, traicionen también.' ('Paul Éluard', in *Prosa II*, p. 16.)

Quoted also by Juan Alberto Fernández Bañuls, 'Bécquer y la creación del 27: el caso de Cernuda', *Archivo Hispalense*, 54, No. 165 (1971), 50.

[163]Capote Benot, p. 133.

[164]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 165.

[165]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 165.

suggest, is not so much a result of the chaotic outpourings of a tortured mind as a deliberate ploy[166]: the comparison is arbitrary because the words in themselves mean so little. Furthermore, the fact that the words are spoken ('Unos dicen que sí') demonstrates the absence of communication. The following three lines then reflect this idea: 'cielo', 'amor' and 'olvido' are each said to be inside themselves ('cielo dentro de otro cielo', etc.). Each element is thus enclosed within its own tight hermetic circle. Where boundaries between entities cannot be crossed, there can be no communication[167]. The closing stanza then rounds off the poem with the persona, appropriately, locked into a death-like state. This is not true 'automatic writing', but much more deliberate and careful, which in itself is rather closer to Kafka's approach. Nevertheless, Cernuda appears already to have been more radical than Kafka in *Das Schloß*: 'Schloß' does not mean what we expect, but at the same time refers to something. Here the words 'sí y no' seem to mean more or less nothing at all[168]. Is this linguistic chaos?

It was seen in *Das Schloß* that there are still echoes of a 'symbolic framework', but that the pointers to that are like an incomplete jigsaw[169]. Is there any vestige of a symbolic framework in *Un río, un amor*? While it could seem trivial in comparison with the existential strivings of Kafka's protagonist, there is nevertheless some justification in considering the poem 'La canción del oeste' in this regard. The 'oeste' of the title is clearly the American 'Wild West', with a horseman, archetypal symbol of that 'Wild West', the protagonist of the poem. The first stanza is as follows:

---

[166]Bruton argues that the various illogical images in Cernuda's Surrealist-influenced poetry are the manifestation of an explicitly Surrealist desire to look 'at reality with a new eye' ('The Developing Expression in the Poetry of Luis Cernuda: The Rôle of Image and Symbol', Thesis London 1980, p. 144). This is true up to a point, but does not take account of the way in which, as will be seen, the very issue of meaning and of the possibility of meaning becomes a theme in this poetry.

[167]Juan Ramón Resina stresses, in his discussion of 'Si el hombre pudiera decir' from *Los placeres prohibidos*, the inability to speak, arguing that it is an example of 'lenguaje al borde de la insignificación, lenguaje que se problematiza a sí mismo' ('La realidad y el deseo en la poesía de Luis Cernuda', *Hora de Poesía*, 29 (1983), 83). Interestingly, however, 'Si el hombre pudiera decir' is linguistically much less obscure than 'Vieja ribera', and the later poem may contain more a critique of communication than of the meanings of words themselves.

[168]Talens may be right that 'Cernuda nunca llegó a plantearse el problema del lenguaje, *de modo explícito*' (p. 82) (my emphasis), but it is certainly there implicitly.

[169]See above, p. 255.

'Jinete sin cabeza,
Jinete como un niño buscando entre rastrojos
Llaves recién cortadas,
Víboras seductoras, desastres suntuosos,
Navíos para tierra lentamente de carne,
De carne hasta morir igual que muere un hombre.'[170]

This, I believe, is a complete 'deconstruction' of the concept of the 'jinete'. The horseman is an absurd non-person: he is 'sin cabeza'. He is compared with other absurdities: a child looking for 'Llaves recién cortadas' amongst rubbish is a nonsensical activity; 'Navíos para tierra' is a nonsensical idea. In addition, the choice of a somewhat trivial conventional symbol enhances this absurdity. This prepares the ground for the introduction of the love theme in stanza two, forcing us to hold it at a distance and consider it critically. The 'trivial' symbol is thus being used as a kind of 'clue', a pointer towards the more 'serious' issue of 'love'. The two are brought together in the closing stanza:

'Olvidemos pues todo, incluso al mismo oeste;
Olvidemos que un día las miradas de ahora
Lucirán a la noche, como tantos amantes,
Salvo el lejano oeste,
Sobre amor más lejano.'[171]

The concept of 'love' has been stripped of all its conventional imagery and placed alongside this 'deconstructed' picture of a Western cowboy. This causes us to equate the absurdity of this cowboy image with 'love' and see 'love' as absurd also. (This is of course fully consonant with the general tenor of *Un río, un amor*, inspired as it is by a failed experience of love.) The desire to 'forget' both the 'jinete' and 'amor' is thus logical, given their presentation as something completely meaningless. Thus, like Kafka, Cernuda uses conventional symbols. Furthermore, we have to 'piece together the jigsaw' in order to ascertain the meaning of the poem: it is not immediately apparent! Here

---

[170]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 165-6.

[171]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 166.

however the pieces form a much clearer, much less ambiguous picture, and it is more an exploitation of symbols than enigmatic allusions to them. Again, the deconstruction of meaning appears more direct and conclusive than in *Das Schloß*.

While there are no proper names in *Un río, un amor*, unlike *Das Schloß*, the theme of a complete lack of meaning, to which 'La canción del oeste' is pointing, may well recall the near (but not total) semantic void of the long conversations of the latter part of Kafka's novel. This sort of idea is developed further by Cernuda. There is an extent to which, in certain poems, meaning seems to disintegrate altogether into near total obscurity. An excellent example is 'Habitación de al lado'. It is not easy to ascertain even what the theme is here! The poem opens as follows:

'A través de una noche en pleno día
Vagamente he conocido a la muerte.
No la acompaña ningún lebrel;
Vive entre los estanques disecados,
Fantasmas grises de piedra nebulosa.'[172]

And then below:

'Mirad vencido olvido y miedo a tantas sombras blancas
Por las pálidas dunas de la vida,
No redonda ni azul, sino lunática,
Con sus blancas lagunas, con sus bosques
En donde el cazador si quiere da caza al terciopelo.'[173]

The opening two lines seem fairly sensible. (In fact, it is they, together with the last line 'Sin vida está viviendo solo profundamente', which provide the only clue to the significance of the poem[174].) This sense is however immediately followed by nonsense:

---

[172]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 151.

[173]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 151.

[174]Pato discusses Cernuda's technique in *Un río, un amor* of ending poems with a single line, as is the case in 'Habitación de al lado', remarking that 'El efecto total es que ese verso resume y comenta el resto: cierra el poem dándonos ... parte de la clave de su sentido,' (*Los finales poemáticos en la obra de Luis Cernuda* (Boulder, Colorado: Society of Spanish and Spanish-American Studies, 1988), p. 39).

while there may just be a reason for the appearance of the 'lebrel'[175], I do not accept there is any logic behind the 'terciopelo'. Furthermore, even if the 'lebrel' is significant, that significance is deflated by linking the 'cazador' with 'terciopelo'[176]. Is this Surrealist caprice in its most blatant form, 'automatic writing', a throwing together of the unconnected for an effect which is a mystery to all but the poet? We have nevertheless already commented that the first two lines and the last line do provide a clue. This is in fact a poem about the meaninglessness of the persona's life. The meaningless images are there *precisely because they are quite literally meaningless*. We are drawn into a state of confusion, where the signifier does not appear to refer to any signified at all. While we may appear to be able to attempt to make connections and thus interpret the image, this ability is deliberately withheld from us by the juxtaposition with something completely nonsensical. It is a linguistic illustration of the state of the persona's own existence[177], a deliberate demonstration of lack of meaning. In this poem, Cernuda's understanding of the nature of language would seem close to Kafka's: a series of empty signifiers rendering meaning something very fluid and imprecise.

There is however a tension in 'Habitación de al lado' which is not particularly well resolved: the abyss of arbitrariness on the one hand and the two clues which explain that arbitrariness on the other. It is not however in this poem that Cernuda's use of language in his Surrealist poetry is at its most subtle and accomplished. Elsewhere there is a rather more complex interweaving of meaning and non-meaning, where it is the *gap* between signifier and signified which is paramount. 'Dejadme solo' at first sight would

---

[175]Soufas argues that the 'hunting-dogs' are 'vaguely reminiscent of the moon goddess Diana' ('Agents of Power', p. 80), but, if this is the case, it seems capricious and teasing, for there is no evocation of a classical world. Soufas also suggests that 'terciopelo' is 'symbolic of the soft, mildly pleasant life ... for which men opt in exchange for their true freedom' (p. 81), but I find this a little speculative. Harris on the other hand contends that 'En la leyenda el lebrel es uno de los acompañantes de Nimrod y conduce a los muertos al reino de la muerte' ('La escritura surrealista de *Un río, un amor*, de Luis Cernuda', *Ínsula*, Año 44, No. 515 (1989), 16). Certainly this is more plausible than Soufas' argument, but, even if this is the case (and it is admittedly a very obscure allusion, which I should suggest very few readers would recognise), the line reads '*No* la acompaña *ningún* lebrel': does this suggest that traditional legends do not apply?

[176]Harris himself concedes that 'el texto vuelve a la arbitrariedad' ('La escritura surrealista', 16).

[177]This is rather more far-reaching than Harris' comment that 'Al yuxtaponer dos elementos diferenciados, el poeta despierta asociaciones nuevas' ('Ejemplo de fidelidad poética: El superrealismo de Luis Cernuda', *La Caña Gris*, Nos. 6-8 (Otoño de 1962) , p. 106).

appear to support Capote Benot's claim that it is 'muy cerca de la técnica automática'[178]. The poem is a bitter rejection of love[179], but possibly the most interesting part is the first stanza:

> 'Una verdad es color de ceniza,
> Otra verdad es color de planeta;
> Mas todas las verdades, desde el suelo hasta el suelo,
> No valen la verdad sin color de verdades,
> La verdad ignorante de cómo el hombre suele encarnarse en la nieve.'[180]

Our initial reaction here is one of confusion: how can 'color de ceniza' and 'color de planeta' have any bearing on a concept such as 'truth'? It seems completely irrational. Whereas in 'Habitación de al lado' a series of highly arbitrary images are *framed* by the clues to their general significance, here concept and image are *juxtaposed*. (Incidentally, it is worth recalling that the juxtaposition of statement and negation is a feature of the later part of *Das Schloß*[181].) The repetition of 'verdad' highlights that this concept is the primary concern. In lines one and two, by equating two arbitrary images with the notion of 'verdad', the concept of truth is, as it were, 'deconstructed'. Since the two images make no real sense, this 'non-sense' is transferred to the word 'verdad'. In terms of this poem, there is no such thing as truth[182]. The arbitrary images illustrate that the word 'verdad' is no more than an empty signifier, and that the signified itself does not exist in the world as the persona experiences it. In addition, the phrase 'desde el suelo hasta el suelo' appears to be a deliberate deflation of a Platonic-type progression: we should expect it to read 'desde el suelo hasta el *cielo*', but here there is no movement: the persona is entirely earth-bound[183]. In a slightly different, and yet nevertheless still related

---

[178]Capote Benot, p. 130.

[179]This is seen, not only in the title, but also in the first line of the second stanza, 'En cuanto a la mentira, basta decirte «quiero»' (Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 163).

[180]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 163.

[181]See above, p. 259.

[182]Harris comes to a similar sort of conclusion as far as the meaning of this poem is concerned, but with no reference to this sort of linguistic analysis (*Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 40).

[183]See also Bruton, 'The Developing Expression in the Poetry of Luis Cernuda', p. 122. This irony of lack of movement is underlined by the fact that 'suelo' and 'cielo' are phonologically similar, especially in Cernuda's Seville accent.

way, those juxtapositions of statements and negations in *Das Schloß* make the very signifiers used 'empty', and cause us as readers to lose sight of the signified[184]. Whatever the method, the effect is very similar: the demonstration of signifiers' lack of validity. The three remaining lines of the stanza then serve to reiterate and intensify this concept. This reminds us of the apparent meaninglessness in the poems 'Vieja ribera' and 'La canción del oeste'. There was however something which was passed over without comment at that stage, but which by now, given the comparison with *Das Schloß*, may be easily surmised, namely the fact that we are still able to make sense of the poems. The lack of meaning is made explicit. This is a very 'ordered' kind of semantic void, illogical as that might sound. It is this process which I suggest is at work in a particularly accomplished way in 'Dejadme solo'. The word 'verdad' does have a significance in the poem, but it is not the one we expect. The presence together of the apparently meaningful and the apparently meaningless confuses our expectations. What we took to be a meaningful concept is revealed as absurd. Indeed, it is actually possible to quote from the earlier discussion of *Das Schloß* with no loss of validity: 'There is no void, but rather something different'[185].

It has already been mentioned that *Los placeres prohibidos* is less overtly Surrealist. This collection is actually also semantically less obscure. Let us take just one example, from the poem 'Qué ruido tan triste':

'Qué ruido tan triste el que hacen dos cuerpos cuando se aman,
Parece como el viento que se mece en otoño
Sobre adolescentes mutilados,
Mientras las manos llueven,
Manos ligeras, manos egoístas, manos obscenas,'[186]

These lines are not even ambiguous: there is a sense of despair and total disillusionment

---

[184]See above, p. 259.

[185]See above, p. 260. Jacques Ancet agrees in general terms that Cernuda's use of Surrealism 'se está lejos del irracionalismo triunfante de algunos contemporáneos' ('El deseo, lo negro (Sobre Luis Cernuda)', *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, Nos. 514-5 (1993), 216), but does not take his argument any further.

[186]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 177.

with love. They are not particularly 'Surrealist' either: the style is certainly free, and there is nothing in the way of conventional versification, but there is no sign of the chaotic outpourings of the subconscious. What *Los placeres prohibidos* marks is no more than a flirtation with Surrealism, as Cernuda steadily seeks to find his own poetic 'voice', as indeed he does in his later poetry.

To sum up, then, as with Kafka, meaning for Cernuda, at least at this stage in his poetic development, is something fluid, not static, and there is a gap between signifier and signified. What Cernuda does is to demonstrate the existence of that very gap and show us where it lies in a given situation. Thus it is not the case that Cernuda is completely 'deconstructing' meaning or claiming that the concept of meaning is a philosophical nonsense. Rather, when we are presented with images and juxtapositions of terms which appear, in the Surrealist mode, illogical and even absurd, we are prompted to see a principle at work (although it must be admitted that there are both varying degrees of success and times when the poetry may be deemed more genuinely 'Surrealist'). Clues and hints, rather than explicit statements, show us the fact that individual words and concepts may not have their conventional signification, or may even be absurd. This is however more radical than a Surrealist search for striking new images, for there is a probing and questioning of the inherent meaningfulness of words, where, paradoxically, a completely meaningless concept may be part of the very 'message' of an individual poem. Just as there are hints in *Das Schloß* that, while meaning is unreliable, there is still something to interpret, here too, there is still a kind of meaning. Cernuda's use of Surrealism allowed him to experiment with his ideas about language and meaning. The fact that he retains a commitment to poetic meaning, even when writing poetry which was by its nature obscure, to say nothing of the obvious evidence of ordering and structuring, means that it perhaps comes as less of a surprise when in his later poetry he actually attempts to write more clearly rather than obscurely, although still 'contando con la limitación de las palabras' (although this, as will be seen, can appear a considerable contradiction). In this way a reading of Cernuda in conjunction with *Das Schloß* can help us to see more clearly the hold which Kafka still has on meaning. Rather than discuss such an issue at this stage, however, we should turn first to a consideration of the issue of

meaning in Mann's early work and Cernuda's later poetry.

Part II:

The Integration and Reintegration of Meaning: The Triumph of Literary Order?

Despite thematics which undeniably place Mann's work firmly within the twentieth century, his style owes much to the prose style of the nineteenth century, especially to the Realist and Naturalist traditions[187]. Assuming that this is the case (and it would seem pointless to deny Mann's debt to the nineteenth century), to what extent does a traditional view of meaning play a rôle in his work, and are there any signs of its outgrowing of those traditions?

The nature of art in general, and literature in particular, was something which fascinated Mann throughout his life. In his non-creative writing Mann was also frequently given to expounding on the nature of art, and it is in these works that we can gain the clearest insight into his theoretical ideas. By far the most substantial forum in which he gave air to a whole range of ideas is *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen.* Leaving aside his political views, what is particularly illuminating in that work are his statements on the way he wrote during the period up to and including *Der Tod in Venedig.* Under the heading of 'Bürgerlichkeit', Mann has this to say:

> 'Was ich erlebte und gestaltete — aber ich erlebte es wohl erst, *indem* ich es gestaltete —, das war *auch* eine Entwicklung und Modernisierung des Bürgers,'[188]

---

[187]Mann himself referred to *Buddenbrooks* as 'der erste und einzige naturalistische Roman' ('Brief an Carl Helbling', 24.4.1922, *Thomas Mann. Selbstkommentare*, p. 60. See also for example Reed, p. 37ff., for an account of this topic, and Ken Moulden, 'Literarische Vorbilder und Anregungen', in Moulden and von Wilpert, pp. 41-55, for a deeper analysis. Koopmann meanwhile reminds us that 'diese Wirklichkeit nie nur wiedergespiegelt erscheint' ('Warnung vor Wirklichem: Zum Realismus bei Thomas Mann', in *Wegbereiter der Moderne: Studien zu Schnitzler, Hauptmann, Thomas Mann, Hesse, Kaiser, Traven, Kafka, Broch, von Unruh und Brecht. Festschrift für Klaus Jonas*, ed. Helmut Koopmann and Clark Muenzer (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990), p. 77), and Bernd W. Seiler comments that Mann's use of ironic distance can be rather more subjective than realism proper. ('Ironischer Stil und realistischer Eindruck. Zu einem scheinbaren Widerspruch in der Erzählkunst Thomas Manns', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 60 (1986), especially 469. This is especially true of the later work, where the ironic narrator is far from neutral or objective.) This however does not invalidate Mann's debt to the nineteenth century.

[188]Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, p. 139.

The 'Entwicklung und Modernisierung des Bürgers' is not really relevant here. What is relevant is the bald statement 'Was ich erlebte und gestaltete'. Inasmuch as 'Gestalten' is a synonym for 'literarisches Schreiben', then what is conveyed most strongly is the total confidence in the ability of the linguistic medium to bear the weight of the 'Gehalt' which Mann wanted to give it. The contrast with Kafka's agonised doubts about language could not be more marked: Mann does not even say 'gestalten wollte', just 'gestaltete'. It is a completed act, about which nothing further requires to be said. This confidence in language is then illustrated more profoundly later in the same work:

> 'Denn ein Manifest, wenn es stark ist, vermag allenfalls zu fanatisieren, aber zu *befreien* vermag einzig das Werk der Kunst.'[189]

If 'Kunst' is going to 'befreien', then the words on the page must, of necessity, have a meaning in themselves. Such a view could not be further from the 'abyss of non-meaning'. First, because such a view of art hinges on precision: it is dependent on the conscious artist, in full control, being able to give unique and perfect 'Gestalt' to a particular 'Gehalt'. Second, because this idea derives directly from the Neo-classicists, especially Goethe and Schiller, where order, structure, harmony and freedom were the cornerstone of their ideas[190]. If the artist cannot guarantee that a work will have the meaning he or she would impart to it, the effect on the audience is unknowable, and, as a result, the concept of 'freedom' can only be judged from the perspective of the audience. What Mann articulates then is not merely a vague notion that meaning and linguistic order could exist, but the total conviction that they do exist, and that they are a finite, knowable quantity[191].

---

[189]Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, p. 311. Quoted also in Ernst Nündel, *Die Kunsttheorie Thomas Manns* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1972), p. 102, and in Horst S. Daemmrich, 'Mann's Portrait of the Artist: Archetypal Patterns', in *Makers of the Twentieth Century Novel*, ed. Harry R. Garvin (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977), p. 169.

[190]For example, Friedrich Schiller says in *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1978, p. 91):

> 'Die Schönheit ist das Produkt der Zusammenstimmung zwischen dem Geist und den Sinnen; es spricht zu allen Vermögen des Menschen zugleich und kann daher nur unter den Voraussetzungen eines vollständigen und freien Gebrauchs aller seiner Kräfte empfunden und gewürdigt werden.'

[191]Doubtless there are many twentieth century writers who would attest to art's 'liberating' powers,

Before considering Mann's use of language in his literary works, it is worthwhile first of all to cast a glance over the general format of his writing. As far as literary genre is concerned, Mann was not the most radical innovator: he basically adhered to and built upon traditional forms of prose fiction, especially the novel, the 'Novelle' and the short story. Even his later novels, e.g., *Der Zauberberg*, *Lotte in Weimar*, *Doktor Faustus*, never really lose sight entirely of the Realist tradition from which they are descended, although there is a certain degree of experimentation. As far as the early work is concerned in particular, what is overwhelmingly evident is the use of forms which are 'familiar', which maintain their grip on a secure literary and semantic past.

It could well be argued that, even if the format is not particularly innovative, this does not exclude it from semantic innovation. What Mann does however is to keep the traditional forms within the boundaries of our own expectations of them. There is something comfortable and 'normal' about Mann's exploitation of traditional forms and genres which fix them securely in a world where literary order, and, by extension, meaning and interpretation also, are still possible.

It is therefore my contention that the question of the lack of a 'center or origin'[192], while it has been asked in metaphysical terms within *Buddenbrooks*, does not appear to have been asked in a theoretical way about language. Is this then still true when Mann actually writes creatively? This is an answer which is actually very easily found: considering the three most important works of Mann's early period (up to the beginning of the First World War), then what characterises *Buddenbrooks*, *Tonio Kröger* and *Der Tod in Venedig* is their semantic clarity[193]. There are areas where the interpretation is

---

including those whose work appears 'obscure'. What Mann however appears to be suggesting is that the *author* can know that the *reader* will be liberated: this unquestionably entails total confidence in the linguistic medium.

[192]See above, p. 252.

[193]While it is not feasible to discuss Mann's later work in any depth here, I do not believe that there is any substantial alteration in Mann's own attitudes to language. Indeed, the very fact that Mann is so concerned in his later work with exploring 'ideas' (e.g., the nature of pre-First World War European society in *Der Zauberberg*, German Fascism in *Doktor Faustus*) is evidence in itself of a continuing philosophical

disputed, obviously, but is it possible to speak of a gap between signifier and signified, as is the case with Kafka and Cernuda? It is easy to find examples to confirm that this is not the case. The following is the closing paragraph of *Buddenbrooks*, referring to Sesemi Weichbrodt after she has triumphantly claimed that the promise of eternal life is true and certain:

> 'Sie stand da, eine Siegerin in dem guten Streite, den sie während der Zeit ihres Lebens gegen die Anfechtungen von seiten ihrere Lehrerinnenvernunft geführt hatte, bucklig, winzig und bebend vor Überzeugung, eine kleine, strafende, begeiserte Prophetin.'[194]

The most important word of this quotation in this context is the very last one, 'Prophetin'. Comment was made above regarding the dispute over the meaning of this closing scene: is the narrator affirming or denying the religious promise? If it is affirmation, then 'Prophetin' has its expected, traditional meaning, if a denial, then it does not. Without wishing to reiterate the earlier argument, the conclusion was, and remains, that it is a denial[195]. This being the case, what is the relationship between signifier and signified? Overtly, that the word 'Prophetin' does not refer to its dictionary definition, so signifier does not refer directly to the expected signified. This is however a facile and simplistic argument. The use of 'Prophetin' here is plainly ironic. All the elements of comedy — *all the linguistic signals* — are there in the paragraph to warn us as readers not to take the final word absolutely literally. In particular, the phrase 'bucklig, winzig und bebend vor Überzeugung' is intended to convey an amusing image. We are thus linguistically prepared for the shift in meaning which occurs with 'Prophetin'. The signifier does not refer to its literal signified, it is true, but it does refer to a clearly definable signified which the text does *not* withhold from us. By the time we read 'Prophetin', we expect the 'new' meaning. Thus Mann's use of language is far from Kafka's prose and Cernuda's Surrealist poetry[196]. It is *overtly meaningful*: there is no 'deconstruction' of the concept of

---

commitment to meaning.

[194]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 774.

[195]See above, p. 29.

[196]For example, in 'Dejadme sólo', the word 'verdad' has no meaning (although it has a significance for the poem as a whole, for 'truth', in terms of the poem, does not exist) (see also above, p. 270). Here however

a 'Prophetin' but an ironic stance, which itself is a traditional technique, set within a traditional, secure linguistic order.

If Mann's writing is as linguistically 'integrated' as this, i.e., existing in a state before the 'disintegration' into literary chaos has taken place, what does this entail for the nature and style of his writing? If language is disintegrating, then one thing already observed in Kafka's and Cernuda's writing is the extent to which the traditional symbolic framework is disintegrating also[197]. While vestiges are there which can point us back towards 'symbols' which were once secure and even universal, what the continuing integration of language and meaning in Mann's work must of necessity entail is that the traditional symbolic framework is still there. Both meaning and a traditional symbolic framework are dependent, not on each other, but on a fundamental philosophical premise, i.e., that there is something external and eternal which guarantees their presence[198]. (It is ironic that *Buddenbrooks* doubts the existence of God, but Mann evidently does not require God to believe in the continuing 'invariable presence' of art: the idea that 'Kunst' can 'befreien'[199] is in itself an illustration of its almost 'demi-god' status.) There must still be an ability to 'make connections', not just between individual words, but also with a broader 'stock' of ideas and inherited concepts which the author must know will be 'meaningful' to his audience.

Are there traditional 'symbols' within the work of Thomas Mann? Günter Reiß argues against this idea, and claims that, in response precisely to the disintegration of the symbol, it is the *allegory* which is of paramount importance for Mann's works[200]. Reiß argues that Mann was unclear and inconsistent in his references to 'symbol' and

---

'Prophetin' is clearly mocking Sesemi's near-pretensions to being a 'prophetess'.

[197]See above, pp. 255ff and 266267ff.

[198]Günter Reiß comments pertinently (in general terms, although not necessarily in terms of Mann's work):

> 'Die Gemeinsamkeit dieser geistigen Welt, die Dichter und Publikum in einen einheitlichen Erkenntnishorizont hineinstellt, ist eine der Symbol-Voraussetzungen.'

(*»Allegorisierung« und moderne Erzählkunst: Eine Studie zum Werk Thomas Manns* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1970), p. 22.)

[199]See above, p. 276.

[200]Reiß, *passim*.

'allegory'[201], and concludes ultimately that:

> 'Das »allegorisierede« Erzählen versucht nämlich ein »Bild« zu erstellen, das das Nacheinander von Worten, dem es seine Entstehung verdankt, zu einem simultanen Gebilde verwandelt, das letztlich dann den ganzen Roman umfaßt.'[202]

Reiß is not so much concerned with a process in Mann's work of 'deconstructing' signifier and signified as with finding a more accurate terminology for Mann's use of imagery. This conclusion does not question the existence of 'meaning': if there were no meaning, then there would be no 'Gebilde' either. This is illogical however, because, if meaning disintegrates, then so does the traditional symbolic framework, and vice versa. Reiß tries to keep meaning within the context of a disintegrating symbol which he calls 'allegory'. What is more, he actually admits that Mann talked at times of 'allegory' as 'eine hohe Form'[203], which leaves us in a very unsatisfactory situation: if allegory can be 'eine hohe Form' also, then is there any sense in talking of the disintegration of the symbol in favour of the allegory? Meaning is either a problem or it is not a problem: one form cannot be abandoned because of a 'Sprachkrise' only to embrace wholeheartedly another[204].

What does Mann's actual use of imagery suggest? *Der Tod in Venedig* is a very complex and detailed work which employs extremely rich imagery. But is this imagery 'symbolic' in any traditional sense? The whole of the story can be read and explained 'naturalistically': an ageing artist travels to Venice, becomes infatuated with a young boy, and dies of cholera. It can also however be read and explained entirely in terms of the

---

[201]Reiß, especially p. 42ff.

[202]Reiß, p. 248.

[203]Reiß, p. 41. Quoted also in Herbert Anton, *Die Romankunst Thomas Manns: Begriffe und hermeneutische Strukturen* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1972), p. 10.

[204]Reiß comments (p. 83):

> 'Sinn und Bild, um diese Termine hier zu verwenden, sind nicht kongruent, sondern fallen »auseinander«. Nur durch einen Akt des Bewußtseins werden sie einander zugeordnet.'

If the process of 'Auseinanderfallen' has begun, however, why should 'allegorisierende Vemittlung' be able to reverse that process in a 'Bemühung um Einheit' (p. 83)? The allegory could only be a partial form as well, which does not tally with his claim on p. 248 that there is a 'simultane[s] Gebilde'.

imagery which it uses[205]. The following is the description from chapter one of the stranger Aschenbach meets in Munich:

> 'Offenbar war [der Fremde] durchaus nicht bajuwarischen Schlages: wie denn wenigstens der breit und gerade gerandete Basthut, der ihm den Kopf bedeckte, seinem Aussehen ein Gepräge des Fremdländischen und Weitherkommenden verlieh. Freilich trug er dazu den landesüblichen Rucksack um die Schultern geschnallt ... und in der Rechten einen mit eiserner Spitze versehenen Stock,'[206]

There are parallels between the description of this stranger and the ancient Greek god Hermes, who 'is represented with wings on his sandals, a winged cap or broad-brimmed felt hat, and the herald's staff'[207]. In naturalistic terms he is no more than a stranger, and the parallels are coincidental. On the level of the story's imagery, the character's significance lies in the fact that Hermes was, amongst other things, 'conductor of the souls of the dead to the Underworld'[208], thus foreshadowing Aschenbach's death, and creating an atmosphere of doom and foreboding[209]. In conventional, pre-'Sprachkrise' terms, a symbol 'is what it represents'[210]. Inasmuch as this stranger is not literally Hermes, then plainly this is not the case. That however is only on the one, naturalistic level. On the level of the imagery of this 'Novelle', he *is* Hermes. *Der Tod in Venedig* does not say that 'the stranger is like Hermes', but simply states what 'the stranger' is like. The parallels are there for us as readers to draw, deliberately planted by the author. The strength of the parallels is confirmed and intensified as the various images are

---

[205]See also Swales (*Thomas Mann: A Study*, p. 41). Marson exaggerates the status of the mythological imagery in the 'Novelle' to the extent that he claims that it 'is in the first instance a mythological Novelle' (p. 148). I reiterate however my opinion that the 'Novelle' works both on the level of its mythological imagery and on the more 'naturalistic' level, *simultaneously*.

[206]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, pp. 560-1.

[207]Howatson and Chilvers, p. 263.

[208]Howatson and Chilvers, p. 263.

[209]Heidi M. and Robert J. R. Rockwood contend that this figure, and the various counterparts later (the homosexual on the boat to Venice, the gondolier, the street musician) corresponds to Jung's archetype of 'the Shadow', which represents 'the negative or the dark side of the personality' ('The Psychological Reality of Myth in *Der Tod in Venedig*', *Germanic Review*, 59 (1984), 137-8).

[210]Erich Heller, *Kafka*, p. 116. It is ironic that Heller uses a definition like this to refer to a novel (*Das Schloß*) which is post-'Sprachkrise' and cannot logically have that sort of traditional symbolic frame of reference, but only the vestiges of a symbolic framework.

presented to us: the vision of the Indian jungle, the aged homosexual on the boat, the gondola trip, the street musician[211], and so on. The refusal to make the parallels explicit (i.e., by not saying that the stranger 'looks like Hermes') means that the web of imagery must be seen in its own terms, as images which are projected on to the various characters but which exist in their own right, as an *autonomous layer* within the 'Novelle'. Furthermore, the images are traditional ones which are taken from the stock of Western knowledge and culture, not invented. This is a genuine, traditional symbol[212].

There is a further element to Mann's use of language. In *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, Mann comments, 'meine Kunstarbeiten, urteilt darüber, wie ihr wollt und müßt, aber *gute Partituren waren sie immer*'[213]. Such a clear desire to compare his writing with *music* specifically, which is pure form, indicates that Mann's desire was to create an *integrated whole* in his work, where the sound and rhythm of the language play an important part in the overall structure and meaning. This sort of idea, of a 'musicality of language', is something which is associated more with poetry than with prose, where stylistic features such as rhyme, assonance, metre and so forth obviously play a major

---

[211]It is worth noting that Aschenbach's encounter with the street musician represents the culmination of his decline: this is symbolised, not only by the presence of the musician himself, but also by the fact that, as John S. Angermeier remarks, Aschenbach during the performance is drinking pomegranate juice. ('The Punica Granatum Motif in Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig*', *Germanic Notes and Reviews*, 26 (1995), 13, and Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 622. See also Martina Hoffmann, p. 87.) Pomegranates are linked with the myth of Persephone, the goddess of death, thus underscoring the inevitability of Aschenbach's imminent demise. On the other hand, however, I find Wendy Philipson's argument that the various figures 'fulfil a devil-role' perhaps a little exaggerated ('The Part Played by Evil in the Works of Thomas Mann', Thesis London 1973, p. 55).

[212]Frizen argues that Mann follows Nietzsche's analysis of language as 'vermodert' and states that 'die polyperspektivische Sicht auf das Leben ... leistet eine Approximation an das Totum des Lebens' (pp. 367-9). Mann certainly follows Nietzsche in his doubts about the status of art and the artist, raising doubts throughout his creative *œuvre* about the justification for art, especially in *Doktor Faustus*, where Randolph J. Klawiter goes so far as to claim that Mann's 'solution might even be said to be anti-artist' ('The Artist-Intellectual, in or versus Society? A Dilemma', in *Studies in German Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Festschrift for Frederic E. Coehnen*, ed. Siegfried Mews (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. 246). There is however little evidence of a 'Sprachkrise' in his writing.

[213]Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, p. 319. H. A. Basilius uses this quotation to argue that *Tonio Kröger* is structured according to the musical '*sonata-allegro*' form, although personally I think this might be a little exaggerated ('Thomas Mann's Use of Musical Structure and Techniques in *Tonio Kröger*', *Germanic Review*, 19 (1944), 290).

rôle, at least in pre-twentieth century poetry. Certainly such devices can only be of secondary importance in a prose work, but there is nevertheless evidence that Mann was genuinely concerned with the 'sound' of his writing. His use of 'Leitmotiv'[214] is one aspect of this: for example, in *Der Tod in Venedig*, the stranger in Munich is described as 'nicht bajuwarischen Schlages'[215], while the street musician in chapter five is 'nicht venezianischen Schlages'[216]. Similarly, the aged homosexual on the boat going to Venice in chapter three 'leckte auf abscheulich zweideutige Art mit der Zungenspitze den Mundwinkel'[217]; the street musician again is also given to 'die Zunge schlüpfrig im Mundwinkel spielen zu lassen', which lends his performance 'etwas Zweideutiges'[218]. By using such similar phrasings, Mann lets us 'hear' the various echoes in the text. Having recognised the linguistic similarity, we can go back and compare the situations, and discover that these three incidents (and many others) mark significant stages in Aschenbach's decline. The 'sound' of the language actually *helps* the meaning of the text to be *revealed* to us[219]. This is an indication of considerable commitment to the possibility of meaning and to the ability to create literary order.

There is a further dimension to the use of sound in Mann's writing. There are times when the language is attempting to be overtly imitative of what it is describing. This can be seen to good effect in *Buddenbrooks*, when Hanno is fantasising at the piano:

> '... es war das Motiv, das erste Motiv, was erklang! Und was nun begann, war ein Fest, ein Triumph, eine zügellose Orgie ebendieser Figur, die in allen Klangschattierungen prahlte, sich durch alle Oktaven ergoß, aufweinte, im Tremolando verzitterte, sang, jubelte, schluchzte, angetan mit allem brausenden, klingelnden, perlenden, schäumenden Prunk der orchestralen

---

[214] For an analysis of the origins of Mann's use of the 'Leitmotiv', see Reed, p. 74ff. See further Ute Jung, *Die Musikphilosophie Thomas Manns* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1969), p. 44ff.

[215]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 560.

[216]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 623.

[217]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 577.

[218]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 624.

[219]For an analysis of the use of 'Leitmotiv' in *Buddenbrooks*, see for example Monique Barasch, 'Das Leitmotiv in den "Buddenbrooks" von Thomas Mann', *The USF Language Quarterly*, 18, Nos. 3-4 (1980), 9-14.

Ausstattung sieghaft daherkam...'[220]

What is particularly striking about this is the rhythm: for example, the two clauses 'es war das Motiv, das erste Motiv,' have exactly the same metrical structure (∪ — ∪ ∪ —/∪ — ∪ ∪ —); the sequence of verbs 'verzitterte, sang, jubelte, schluchzte' is a clear evocation of a building up to a climax; this is then intensified by the fact that the sequence of four present participles all have the same metrical structure also: each has three syllables, with the stress on the first syllable. Such a use of rhythm can only have the effect of lending the passage a 'musical' quality, which is precisely what it is describing. Once again, what Mann is doing is making use of the sound of the language to 'help' the meaning, to reflect the meaning in the sound of the words[221], and thus creating an integrated whole.

Mann's writing is thus opposed to Kafka's writing generally and Cernuda's Surrealist-influenced poetry, where meaning is in a state of flux and highly equivocal. There is however one further element which is worthy of discussion. In *Der Tod in Venedig* in particular, the *act* of writing is presented. When sitting on the beach watching Tadzio, Aschenbach writes his 'anderthalb Seiten erlesener Prosa':

> 'Und zwar ging sein Verlangen dahin, in Tadzio's Gegenwart zu arbeiten, beim Schreiben den Wuchs des Knaben zum Muster zu nehmen, ... Nie hatte er die Lust des Wortes süßer empfunden, nie so gewußt, daß Eros im Worte sei, wie während der gefährlich köstlichen Stunden, in denen er ... jene anderthalb Seiten erlesener Prosa formte, deren Lauterkeit, Adel und schwingende Gefühlsspannung binnen kurzem die Bewunderung vieler erregen sollte.'[222]

---

[220]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 765.

[221]Walter Weiß argues further that:

> 'Die sprachliche Integration der Vielheit geschieht durch die Thematisierung von Gestalten (Adjektivierung) und Gebärden (Artgebärde), von Namen, Wortprägungen, Redewendungen, Zitaten, von Landschaften, von Einzelmotiven, Motivgeflechten und Motivkomplexen in toto und durch die ironische Einbeziehung der Gegenperspektive in die Darstellung.'

(*Thomas Manns Kunst der sprachlichen und thematischen Integration* (Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1964), p. 73.)

[222]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 608.

What is important here is the very nature of this work. For all the brilliant 'advertising', as it were, that these 'anderthalb Seiten erlesener Prosa' receive in the 'Novelle', *not one single word* of them is given for us to read and judge for ourselves. Mann gives such prominence to this act of writing (it is a crucial incident in the story) and yet we are not allowed to see it. Why not? Perhaps because Mann dare not write the 'erlesene Prosa' lest it be less 'erlesen' than it is said to be? We can do no more than speculate, it is true, and it could be argued that it is not structurally necessary that it appear, but it leaves a problem: it is a 'perfect' work of art which has no real presence. We are not given any real clue as to what it says[223]. Literature which does not exist cannot have any meaning. It is precisely at this point that, I believe, there is an indication that the integration of meaning in Mann's writing is not as definitive as it would appear. It may not even be conscious on Mann's part, but it is nevertheless true that there are doubts about the nature of the creation of literary order[224]. It can be argued that *Der Tod in Venedig* is in itself evidence of Mann's ability to write meaningfully, and of course it is, but there is still something fundamentally unsettling about this incident in the 'Novelle'. We have the narrator's assurance that the passage is of considerable artistic merit, and yet it is *literally* completely meaningless. Furthermore, the very fact that this is the narrator's assurance rather than Thomas Mann's does in itself suggest a possible distance between author and narrator. Could it be that the *narrator* has greater confidence in the possibility of meaning than his creator? If this is the case (and it can only be a matter of speculation), then Mann could himself be well aware of the problems in Aschenbach's 'anderthalb Seiten', well aware of the cracks in his own edifice. Comment was made earlier that there could be a degree of unreliability in the narrator's presentation of the story[225]. If we compare *Der Tod in Venedig* with *Buddenbrooks*, then there is a difference in narrative perspective: in

---

[223]We are told that it is about a 'brennendes Problem der Kultur und des Geschmackes' (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 608), but this is a quite remarkable piece of non-information! Incidentally, I find Northcote-Bade's claim, based on information from Mann's own experiences in Venice before writing *Der Tod in Venedig*, that this passage is about Wagner, extremely unconvincing: it relies exclusively on that biographical information. There is no evidence in the text for it whatsoever (*Die Wagner-Mythen im Frühwerk Thomas Manns* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1975), p. 88).

[224]Unlike the doubts which are raised about the justification for art (see above, p. 282), this part of *Der Tod in Venedig* casts doubt on the very ability to write.

[225]See above, p. 164, and also Eggenschwiler, p. 74.

the earlier novel, there is a generally much more neutral omniscient narrator[226]. The change by the time of *Der Tod in Venedig*, where the author is drawing back from the narrator, reinforces the argument that Mann is becoming, tentatively, more dubious about meaning, and beginning to allow the *reader* scope to make up his own mind. The change illustrates that there are hints of doubts and uncertainties creeping into Mann's attitudes to language. The fact that Mann still feels able to make us aware of uncertainties in the narrative perspective, however, demonstrates that he has assuredly *not* relinquished his hold on meaning, and that these uncertainties are fairly isolated[227].

What is happening in Mann's writing is the reverse of the situation in Kafka and in Cernuda's *Un río, un amor*: there meaning is fast disintegrating, but the literary works are trying, not so much to 'reconstruct the invariable presence', but to demonstrate where the problems lie and cope with them, to give clues for the reader to grope his way towards meaning, despite the lack of semantic permanence. On the other hand, in Mann's writing what can be perceived is a predominantly pre-'Sprachkrise' orientation, but which lacks *total* conviction. It is almost fully meaningful, but in the last analysis there are cracks which demonstrate that the edifice called meaning is in danger of crumbling, that literary order is facing the threat of its own demise[228]. It is, as it were, the beginning of the end.

---

[226]There is certainly no obvious equivalent in *Buddenbrooks* of the narrator's moral condemnation of Aschenbach's behaviour in *Der Tod in Venedig*.

[227]Peter J. Burgard produces further evidence of a minor 'Sprachkrise' in Mann's early work, especially in the little-read short story *Enttäuschung* (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, pp. 99-105), but conceding that 'One could argue back and forth indefinitely the question of whether the story, as a whole, represents the affirmation or denial of a language crisis' ('From "Enttäuschung" to "Tristan": The Devolution of a Language Crisis in Thomas Mann's Early Work', *German Quarterly*, 59 (1986), 440).

[228]In this way I think Günter Reiß is quite correct to discuss the question of 'Auseinanderfallen' in Mann's work. Where I disagree however is the perspective: I do not accept that there is a 'Bemühung um Einheit' by means of a more appropriate (but, apparently, still meaningful) form called 'allegory'. Neither is it Nietzschean 'Approximation an das Totum des Lebens', as Frizen says. It starts out from the premise of the fundamental possibility of the continued existence of linguistic order, but then there is an awareness that the 'Einheit' which he *achieves* could be in danger of crumbling.

Cernuda's commitment to meaning increases in his later poetry rather than decreases. It is clear that, once meaning is perceived to be disintegrating, it is not a process which can suddenly stop and then go in the opposite direction. A lack of belief in meaning is based on a philosophical standpoint (consciously or unconsciously) and after such doubts have manifested themselves, language cannot be 'mended' and made to do something which was declared to be impossible. It would therefore appear that the idea of a reintegration of meaning is either a blatant contradiction, a change of mind inconsistent with earlier ideas, or an attempt doomed to failure from the start. It would also appear misguided to attempt a comparison with the writing of Thomas Mann, which has been said to have the opposite perspective. To what extent, then, is meaning seen to be 'reintegrated' in the more mature poetry of *La realidad y el deseo*?

It is difficult to discuss Cernuda's theory of poetry in abstract terms, because, apart from 'Palabras antes de una lectura', Cernuda was very unwilling to write down any cohesive argument as to the nature of poetry. It is however possible to glean one or two pointers as to his ideas, and perhaps the clearest expression of these in his mature years is to be found in the 'Entrevista con un poeta', originally published in *Índice Literario* in 1959 and subsequently collected in *Poesía y Literatura II*. In response to a question regarding Cernuda's 'tabla de valores' when reading poetry, Cernuda says:

> '—Me limitaré a decirle que si un gran poeta me aparece como tal, es: 1.º) por la fusión melódica en su verso de palabra, sentido y ritmo; 2.º) por la precisión y hermosura de su lengua; 3.º) por la amplitud de su visión; 4.º) por la riqueza y flexibilidad de su pensamiento. Pero además, y por encima de lo antes dicho, hace falta en el poeta la presencia de lo que llamaría la parte de Dios: el elemento imponderable, el toque mágico que anime y vivifique la materia sobre la cual trabajan sus demás cualidades.'[229]

What is striking here is the conventionality of the ideas: Cernuda does not seem to strike

[229]Cernuda, *Prosa I*, p. 812.

any new ground whatsoever. The first two points in particular are suggestive of a very traditional conception of poetry, not only comparable with Thomas Mann's view of literature, but also with the whole Western tradition. With such conventional ideas, the nature of language and meaning does not really seem to come into question. He appears to have taken a retrograde step and shrunk back from his feeling in 1935 that 'las palabras ... traicionan'[230]. This would appear to be confirmed yet further by his fourth point regarding 'la riqueza y flexibilidad de su pensamiento'. This implies that the 'pensamiento', the discursive content, is ultimately 'knowable', and that, while the form which is the poem is always quite unique, nevertheless that discursive content can still be discovered and understood by reading the poem. There appears to be none of the equivocation that is inherent in the obscure Surrealist-influenced poetry. Furthermore, the comment about 'el elemento imponderable' is particularly interesting: this would appear to be the element of divine or quasi-divine inspiration, the influence of the Muses, as it were, which makes poetry live[231]. There seems to be little indication of a fear that the poetry will not be understood.

This would appear to be a complete reversal of Cernuda's earlier stance and consequently a total logical inconsistency. What about the poetry itself? It has been observed already how Mann's confidence in meaning expressed itself first of all in the continuing use of traditional forms (novel, 'Novelle', etc.). While this is certainly the case in Cernuda's earliest poetry of *Primeras Poesías* and *Égloga, Elegía, Oda*, where there is rigorous employment of traditional Spanish verse forms, this is not illogical, because these two collections precede, not only Cernuda's poetic maturity, but also the 'chaos' of *Un río, un amor*. The mature poetry of *Donde habite el olvido* onwards would in terms of verse form appear to occupy some kind of 'middle ground'. The near-abandonment of versification in the Surrealist-influenced poetry[232] is itself abandoned. There is however never any return to the conscious traditionality of the early poetry. What does happen is

---

[230]Cernuda, *Prosa I*, p. 605. See also above, p. 264.

[231]Compare this with 'Desolación de la Quimera', *Poesía completa*, pp. 527-30.

[232]Oddly enough, even in *Un río, un amor* there are poems where metre and versification are very traditional: 'Cuerpo en pena', for example, is written in regular Alexandrines, which fits very uncomfortably with Surrealism.

that there is a *kind* of versification, but it is not really regular or conventional. Sometimes there are poems which follow a clear stanza pattern, such as 'El intruso' from *Vivir sin estar viviendo*[233], but often poems mix stanza lengths (for example 'El prisionero' from the same collection, where two four-line stanzas are followed by two two-line stanzas[234]). What is more, while assonance is a frequent stylistic feature, rhyme is extremely rare. Obviously there is something of a tension between this freer type of versification and the very conventional theoretical ideas of 'Entrevista con un poeta'. Complete confidence in meaning would cause us to expect very traditional verse forms, since free verse is a modern innovation, and irregularity and disorder go 'hand-in-hand' with a world-view characterised by disintegration, and, by extension, with meaning which has lost the 'invariable presence' which guarantees it. In this way, then, there is at least a hint that Cernuda's practice could be appearing to be falling away from a state of total linguistic security.

If Cernuda's verse forms appear to be entering a more equivocal state, what about his actual use of language in his mature poetry? While the verse forms are freer, curiously enough the language seems much more overtly comprehensible. After the crisis of *Un río, un amor*, signifier and signified seem to have moved much closer together. The desire to deconstruct words and concepts appears to have disappeared. A good example of this new-found confidence is the poem 'El poeta' from *Vivir sin estar viviendo*, where Cernuda explores the nature of his poetic career. The following is the second stanza:

> 'Mucho nos dicen, desde el pasado, voces
> Ilustres, ascendientes de la palabra nuestra,
> Y las de lengua extraña, cuyo acento
> Experiencia distina nos revela. Mas las cosas,
> El fuego, el mar, los árboles, los astros,
> Nuevas siempre aparecen.'[235]

The first thing that is surely striking here after the poems of *Un río, un amor* is the clarity

---

[233]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 391-2.

[234]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 395. See also Maristany, pp. 78 & 80.

[235]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 404.

and simplicity of the language. We cannot pretend that the words are in any way difficult to follow. It does not appear that the previous gap between signifier and signified has so much diminished as it has completely vanished. It is particularly significant that Cernuda here talks about language itself, and especially 'lengua extraña'. Here if nowhere else we might expect there to be voiced a degree of confusion, a certain barrier to comprehension. On the contrary: the verb which is directly linked to foreign languages is 'revelar', the exact converse of obfuscation, and a total contradiction of the linguistic processes which were evident in *Un río, un amor*. The only area of doubt might surround the words 'Mas las cosas ... nuevas siempre aparecen'. But this is far from the new and unexpected meanings contained in poems such as 'La canción del oeste'. This bespeaks an enhancement of personal experience. The rest of the poem then proceeds to explore more fully the relationship between the poet and his world, and then the last stanza is as follows, referring to 'la rosa del mundo', first mentioned in the penultimate stanza:

> 'Para el poeta hallarla es lo bastante,
> E inútil el renombre u olvido de su obra,
> Cuando en ella un momento se unifican,
> Tal uno son amante, amor y amado,
> Los tres complementarios luego y antes dispersos:
> El deseo, la rosa y la mirada.'[236]

The second line here seems to cast doubt on the values of poetic creation and favour more the positive experience of the world itself. It is however important not to overlook the fact stated in line one that this experience is 'lo bastante' for *'el poeta'*, i.e., not *any* individual, but specifically the one whose life it is to capture these moments in words. The poetry itself is not called into question, and by extension there can be no suggestion of placing meaning in an enigmatic light[237]. In fact, when we consider that 'amante, amor y amado' are for Cernuda three of the most basic elements of his poetry anyway, then this 'rosa del mundo' in which 'los tres complementarios se unifican' could well be an image of a poem. What is more, unlike Aschenbach's 'anderthalb Seiten erlesener Prosa', we

---

[236]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 405.

[237]Debicki goes so far as to say, in his discussion of this poem (p. 299), that:

> 'el poeta ... le da vida [a la belleza natural] y la hace resaltar y ser percibida por los hombres'.

are told the basic content, so it is a poem with both a form and a meaning. Cernuda appears to have 'reintegrated' meaning totally.

A good example of the extent to which Cernuda reacts against his earlier stance of doubt about meaning is to be found in the poem 'Cordura' from *Las nubes*. This poem was discussed above in relation to Cernuda's flirtation with Christianity[238] and is one of the rare expressions of hope in Cernuda's dark and dismal poetry from the early time he spent in exile[239]. The crux of the poem is the fourth stanza from the end:

> 'Duro es hallarse solo
> En medio de los cuerpos.
> Pero esa forma tiene
> Su amor: la cruz sin nadie.'[240]

'La cruz sin nadie' is, as Harris comments, 'the [Christian] image of the empty cross'[241]. The empty cross is one of the most potent symbols of the last two thousand years, and is known and instantly recognisable throughout the Western world, irrespective of whether individuals are religious or not. By invoking it, there is almost no need for the remaining three stanzas, for they do little more than explain its significance for Cernuda: the ability to find 'comunión con los hombres' and the hope that 'La noche será breve'[242]. More important than its significance here is however the very fact that it has been used. It would be completely unsatisfactory in a poet who postulated in his poetry the disintegration of language and meaning, because the Cross is the cornerstone of a Western symbolic framework. This is illustrated further by comparison with Kafka, because there, since that framework is crumbling, references to it inevitably become oblique and unclear. Cernuda uses it directly and with confidence[243].

---

[238]See above, pp. 123f. & 128f.

[239]It dates from 1938. See endnote in Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 796.

[240]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 286.

[241]Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 81. Like Harris (p. 81, note 33), I do not agree with Silver's interpretation that it is 'the agony of desire' (Silver, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, p. 112).

[242]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 286.

[243]The fact that the symbol is recognisable still is one of the illogicalities inherent in modern linguistic philosophy. Logically we should be able to understand nothing, but nevertheless we do: this is a basic

It may be possible to counter that Cernuda could have recourse to such traditional symbols in 'Cordura' because he was himself exploring the idea of faith in Christianity. There is however no departure from such a use of symbol. A good example is to be found in the poem 'Urania' from *Como quien espera el alba*. This poem is primarily about order in love, but the way it is expressed is of considerable relevance to the present argument. The following is the second stanza:

'Ella está inmóvil. Cubre aéreo
El ropaje azulado su hermosura virgen;
La estrella diamantina allá en la frente
Arisca tal la nieve, y en los ojos
La luz que no conoce sombra alguna.'[244]

If we recall *Der Tod in Venedig*, the symbolism there is constructed by allowing the various images associated with certain characters to form a network in their own right within the 'Novelle'[245]. Cernuda here takes this one stage further by giving a figure from Greek mythology a physical presence within the poem. It is exclusively the symbol which is there in the poem, and what she represents (i.e., Platonic love primarily) has to be known by the reader as part of a common stock of Western knowledge. The symbol thus very vividly exists in its own right within the poem[246]. By the same token, the comparison with *Der Tod in Venedig* is illustrative once again of just how much Cernuda has returned to a traditional view of the nature of language and meaning[247].

---

premise of M. H. Abrams' counter-argument to radical Post-Structuralism ('The deconstructive angel', in Lodge, pp. 264-76). The point here however is that a poet cannot simultaneously doubt meaning as a definable entity and still use language as if he believed in it. Cernuda's usage necessarily entails his belief.

[244]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 328.

[245]See above, p. 282.

[246]Carmelo Gariano ('Aspectos clásicos de la poesía de Luis Cernuda', *Hispania*, 48 (1965), 241) makes the further interesting point about this poem that the 'números' in the third line of the fourth stanza 'representan la misteriosa esencia del arte clásico formado de ritmo y medida', a further indication of the richness of the traditional symbol which Cernuda has here employed. Ruiz Silva, meanwhile, can see resonances of the 'música de las esferas' ('La música en la obra de Luis Cernuda', *Revista de literatura*, 39 (1978), 74).

[247]For a thorough analysis of Cernuda's uses of symbols in his later poetry, see Bruton, 'The Developing Expression in the Poetry of Luis Cernuda', chapters V, VI and VII. In particular, Cernuda's use of symbol can be seen to centre on various 'recurring images' (p. 388).

It was argued above that Mann uses language 'musically' to reinforce the meaning of his works. Is such an overt creation of 'meaningful form' part of Cernuda's poetry? Evidence of this can actually be seen even in *Un río, un amor*: for example, the way in which the repetition of 'verdad', in 'Dejadme solo', juxtaposed with arbitrary images, demonstrates that the word 'verdad' meant nothing, was discussed earlier[248]. Put another way, it is the *form* of the poem which helps gives the clue to its meaning. Thus when meaning was seen to be disintegrating, Cernuda exploits the form to make the meaning more clear. But is there any evidence of the sound of the words reflecting the meaning in order to form an 'integrated whole'? An interesting poem is 'El arpa' from *Como quien espera el alba*. I quote the poem in its entirety:

'Jaula de un ave invisible,
Del agua hermana y del aire,
A cuya voz solicita
Pausada y blanda la mano.

Como el agua prisionera
Del surtidor, tiembla, sube
En una fuga irisada,
Las almas adoctrinando.

Como el aire entre las hojas,
Habla tan vaga, tan pura,
De memorias y de olvidos
Hechos leyenda en el tiempo.

¿Qué frutas del paraíso,
Cuáles aljibes del cielo
Nutren tu voz? Dime, canta,
Pájaro del arpa, oh lira.'[249]

Personally, I think an evocation of the music of the harp is the principal theme of this

---

[248]See above, p. 270.

[249]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 343.

poem[250]. The harp produces a very gentle, 'floating', ethereal sort of sound. This is to a certain extent reflected in Cernuda's choice of words: in the first stanza especially there is a predominance of 'a' vowels, which is the most open of the vowels, and there are surprisingly few consonants, the only really harsh sound being the very first one, the velar fricative of 'Jaula'. While this is admittedly in a strong position as the first sound, nevertheless it is over very quickly, allowing the majority of the stanza to dwell on the softer, more 'ethereal' sounds which attempt to imitate the sound of a harp. There are many soft sounds throughout the poem. The last line, indeed, juxtaposes two vowel sounds ('arpa, oh') which inevitably merge into one another. This imitation of the harp creates a soft, gentle poem which in turn echoes and reinforces the main theme of music[251].

The comparison with Thomas Mann's writing, then, illustrates how strong Cernuda's adherence to meaning is: only the slightly less traditional verse forms suggest a discordant note; otherwise Cernuda's mature poetry could, from the point of view of the creation of literary order, inhabit a world before *Un río, un amor*. This is of course nonsensical. The comparison with Kafka plainly demonstrated Cernuda's doubts about language: for all the endurance of a kind of meaning, those doubts are not an illusion. The mature poetry does *not* invalidate the early poetry. So how can this be reconciled? Purely as a contradiction? There are however cracks and holes in Cernuda's apparent total reintegration of meaning. 'Silla del rey', from *Vivir sin estar viviendo*, is a meditation on Philip II's building of 'El Escorial'. Since the palace is perceived as an artistic creation, it is in fact on a deeper level Cernuda's reflection on his own creative *œuvre*[252]. Most of the

---

[250]Silver argues that the 'bird-harp sings because it is in consonance with the natural world' (*Et in Arcadia Ego*, p. 41), while Bruton argues that the poem is about 'the struggle to write poetry' ('The Developing Expression in the Poetry of Luis Cernuda', p. 373). I find such ideas to be no more than secondary to the main theme of the music itself. (Cernuda's obvious love of music makes it perfectly reasonable that he should write a poem dedicated to it.)

[251]For further analysis of the 'musicality' of Cernuda's poetry, see Ruiz Silva, *Arte, amor y otras soledades*, p. 83ff.

[252]For a detailed and illuminating study of the poem, see Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, pp. 102-3, 107-8 and 113-4. Concha Zardoya concentrates on the issue of Spain and the progress of history ('El Escorial' was in Franco's Spain something of a symbol of the Establishment and traditional Spanish values), pointing out that we do not know if Cernuda 'siente amor o desprecio por ellas' ('Imagen de España en la poesía de Luis Cernuda', *Sin Nombre*, 6, No. 4 (1976), 39).

poem is in 'exultant, arrogant mood'[253], for example:

'Una armonía total, irresistible, surge;
Colmena de musical dulzor, resuena todo;
Es en su celda el fraile, donde doma el deseo;
En su campo el soldado, donde forja la fuerza;
En su espejo el poeta, donde refleja el mito.'[254]

The positive images of poetry here are obvious. The implication from the basic parallel of Escorial/poetry is that Cernuda's poetry is just as impressive and magnificent as the king's palace. But there is a problem. Cernuda's edifice is not necessarily as steadfast as it might be:

'La mutación es mi desasosiego,
Que victorias de un día en derrotas se cambien.
Mi reino triunfante ¿ha de ver su ruina?'[255]

Like any building, there is a danger that the 'structure' of Cernuda's poetry will disintegrate and collapse[256]. If Cernuda's poetry is similar to 'El Escorial', then it must be the pinnacle of artistic creation, and yet the seeds of destruction are there[257]. If we analyse

---

[253]Harris, *Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 113.

[254]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 420-1.

[255]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 421-2.

[256]See also Luis Martínez Cuitiño, 'El reflejo del mundo en la obra de Luis Cernuda', *Revista de Literatura*, 45 (1983), 131-2.

[257]Both Coleman (p. 128) and Jiménez-Fajardo (*Luis Cernuda*, p. 113) emphasise lines from the stanza after the one quoted, to support the claim that the poem stresses the *absence* of the threat of destruction:

'Mi obra no está afuera, sino adentro,
En el alma;
...
Y esto que yo edifico
No es piedra, sino alma, el fuego inextinguible.' (*Poesía completa*, p. 422.)

Javier Almodóvar and Miguel A. Márquez also compare these lines with Heraclitus to prove the same thing ('Heráclito en *La realidad y el deseo*', *Estudios clásicos*, 30, No. 93 (1988), 46). What all these arguments do however is fall into the same trap as the king himself, and ignore the very real doubts which Cernuda actually voices, not only in the previous stanza, but also in the fourth-last stanza, thus:

'No puedo equivocarme, no debo equivocarme;' (*Poesía completa*, p. 422).

The frantic, desperate denials in this line are enough in themselves to illustrate the extent to which there is an awareness of the threat of decay.

this more closely, then the question arises, 'What is Cernuda's poetry?' At its most basic level it consists of words on a page put together in such a way that they become 'meaningful'. What then must be happening if it changes to 'derrotas'? The consignment to obscurity was always a fear for Cernuda and certainly has a part to play in this. There is however something more fundamental at work. If the poetry is a 'derrota', then it must mean nothing to future generations. It loses its meaning. *Literary order is once again becoming literary chaos.* This is admittedly not exactly the same as a 'deconstruction' of meaning, but it nevertheless illustrates that there is still something problematic about it: for all that the poet tries to construct meaning, he cannot guarantee the effect it will have on the reader. For all the apparent reintegration of meaning, there is still evidence of doubt: it cannot mean something if it does not mean something *to someone*. Perhaps this in turn is what is so disconcerting about Aschenbach's 'anderthalb Seiten erlesener Prosa': something that cannot be read cannot have any meaning, cannot have any literary form.

What is evident, then, from this analysis of Cernuda's use of language in his poetry after his 'chaotic' overtly Surrealist phase, is something very close to a total reintegration of meaning. Overtly comprehensible language and the use of traditional symbols bear such strong similarities, in a theoretical sense, to Mann's use of language and meaning that it is difficult to tell that the mature poetry follows a phase which casts very strong doubts on the possibility of universal meaning. This is a contradiction, and again demonstrates the remarkable way in which *La realidad y el deseo* can be seen to unite strands from both Mann and Kafka, even two strands which seem irreconcilably opposed. There is however one further element: as the final analysis of the disintegration of meaning points towards meaning*ful*ness, so too the final analysis of the integration of meaning in Mann and the reintegration of meaning in Cernuda point towards meaning*less*ness. It is thus finally to an attempt to bring these conflicting elements together which we now must turn.

Part III:

Synthesis: Chaotic Order and Ordered Chaos: Cernuda, Mann and Kafka

In order to proceed to a more complete (if inevitably imperfect) understanding of the nature of this 'modern meaning' in Mann, Kafka and Cernuda, it is profitable to abandon the hitherto mainly chronological approach adopted in this thesis and start this time with the poetry of Cernuda. A poem particularly worthy of consideration is Cernuda's 'A un poeta futuro' from *Como quien espera el alba*. In terms of theme it is similar to an idea in 'Silla del rey' from *Vivir sin estar viviendo*. Cernuda confronts the, for him, very vexed question of what will happen to his work once he has died and it has departed completely from the control of its creator. While 'Silla del rey' however is at least largely characterised by arrogance and self-assurance, despite the doubts which were seen as present, the tone of 'A un poeta futuro' is much more negative and uncertain about the future and the future rôle of all of Cernuda's work. The first thing that is striking about the poem is that each of the first four stanzas (out of a total of only eight) starts with a negative: 'No conozco a los hombres', 'No comprendo a los ríos', 'No comprendo a los hombres', 'Mas no me cuido de ser desconocido'[258]. These in themselves create a very negative, self-doubting impression, an impression of a man who is a stranger in the world. (This is of course one of Cernuda's basic themes throughout *La realidad y el deseo*.) Particularly interesting is the fourth of these, which consists of two negatives in the one line: 'no' and the prefix 'des-' of 'desconocido'. The irony of this line is that, while the adage is that 'two negatives make a positive', in this case the positive is the verb 'cuidarse de', which means 'mirar por su salud', 'atender', 'ocuparse' or '*preocuparse*'[259]. It is most likely that it is 'preocupación' which dominates Cernuda's view as he looks towards the future, which is confirmed in the fifth stanza:

> 'Yo no podré decirte cuánto llevo luchando
> Para que mi palabra no se muera
> Silenciosa conmigo, y vaya como un eco
> A ti, como tormenta que ha pasado
> Y un son vago recuerda por el aire tranquilo.'[260]

---

[258]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 339-41.

[259]*Larousse Diccionario de la lengua española*, ed. Ramón García-Pelayo y Gross (Barcelona: Ediciones Larousse, 1987), p. 228.

[260]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 341.

Despite its being entitled 'A un *poeta* futuro', this is assuredly addressed to any future reader of Cernuda's poetry, not necessarily a poet (although a case can be made for saying that our own readings are in themselves creative and therefore we are 'poets' too[261]). What is most important in these lines is the self-doubt, for a poet is nothing without his audience[262]. The crux of these lines is unquestionably 'Para que mi palabra no se muera/Silenciosa'. It is at this point that Cernuda concentrates on the essence of poetry, and that is 'la palabra'. A word, if it 'dies silently', can have no meaning whatsoever. It represents the total destruction of meaning. It is interesting to recall the comment in 'Palabras antes de una lectura' that 'las palabras *están vivas*, y por lo tanto traicionan' [my emphasis][263]. If 'las palabras' are 'muertas', then this is the final nadir of linguistic chaos: absolute meaninglessness. Nevertheless, even here there is a tiny glimpse of the resurgence of some semblance of meaning: the last line here speaks of 'un son vago'. It is surely something highly equivocal, but nevertheless the conviction that the meaning of his poetry will still be salvaged, rescued from the abyss, that it will still speak to someone. Doubt and affirmation are *coexisting*. In the light of this, let us consider now the closing stanza of the poem:

'Cuando en días venideros, libre el hombre
Del mundo primitivo a que hemos vuelto
De tiniebla y de horror, lleve el destino
Tu mano hacia el volumen donde yazcan
Olvidados mis versos, y lo abras,
Yo sé que sentirás mi voz llegarte,
No de la letra vieja, mas del fondo
Vivo en tu entraña, con un afán sin nombre
Que tu dominarás. Escúchame y comprende.
En sus limbos mi alma quizá recuerde algo,
Y entonces en ti mismo mis sueños y deseos
Tendrán razón al fin, y habré vivido.'[264]

---

[261]Bloom makes a similar comment:

> 'As literary history lengthens, all poetry necessarily becomes verse-criticism, just as all criticism becomes prose-poetry.'

(*A Map of Misreading*, p. 3.)

[262]As Harris says, 'Cernuda needs a public' (*Luis Cernuda: A Study*, p. 113).

[263]Cernuda, *Prosa I*, p. 605. See also above, p. 264.

[264]Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, pp. 342-3.

Doubt comes first here: Cernuda envisions his 'versos' as 'olvidados'. Particularly significant is the choice of the verb 'yacer', which has definite connotations of the gravestone inscription 'Aquí yace...'. Without an audience, literature is dead and dead words for Cernuda are not words at all. At the same time however it is highly ironic that this is itself a poem: the very act of writing is an expression of the conviction that the poet has something meaningful to impart. The definitive statement of the relationship of meaning to non-meaning comes in the second half of this stanza. Meaning has to be a two-way process[265]. For all that the poet believes that what he writes means something to him (which in itself explains how he can return to the traditional 'meaningful' modes of language discussed as the cornerstone of his mature poetry), its status is highly equivocal and precarious until it enters 'en tu entraña', until the reader has completed the process. It is once that process is complete that Cernuda can say 'habré vivido'. The final irony lies in the facts that, first, the poet cannot know if this will ever happen, and second, and more disturbingly, if, as was seen in the fifth stanza, it is no more than an 'eco', a 'son vago', the poet cannot guarantee *how* it will live 'en nuestra entraña'[266]. That depends on *us*[267]. Therefore ultimately what Cernuda seems to seek to do is to find a mode of

---

[265]I can see little justification in María Victoria Utrera's reference to 'el triunfo del poeta' in this poem ('La estructura temporal de *La realidad y el deseo* en *Como quien espera el alba*', *Archivo Hispalense*, 74 (1991), 143). Martha LaFollette Miller meanwhile deals with similar ideas, although she chooses, quite legitimately, to concentrate more on the 'intertextual' concepts of the 'past and future texts that help create his own text' rather than on the direct relationship between Cernuda and individual future readers ('Society, History, and the Fate of the Poetic Word in *La realidad y el deseo*', in *The Word and the Mirror*, ed. Jiménez-Fajardo, especially pp. 171-2).

[266]Soufas argues, in terms of 'Luna llena en Semana Santa', from *Desolación de la Quimera*, that 'the text is not fulfilled in itself but in another form of resurrection, Cernuda's, in the reader' ('«*Et in Arcadia Ego*»: Luis Cernuda, Ekphrasis, and the Reader', *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 7 (1982), 105), but this clearly does not take account of the problem of *how* Cernuda will be 'resurrected'.

[267]This is a theme to which Cernuda returns in the extremely bitter (and artistically not very successful) poem 'A sus paisanos' in *Desolación de la Quimera.* In the fifth stanza we read:

'Si vuestra lengua es la materia
Que empleé en mi escribir y, si por eso,
Habréis de ser vosotros los testigos
De mi existencia y su trabajo,
En hora mala fuera vuestra lengua
La mía, la que hablo, la que escribo.
Así podréis, con tiempo, como venís haciendo,
A mi persona y mi trabajo echar afuera

language which will time and again hold together, and *in tension*, both elements of meaning and non-meaning. That is why his overtly meaningless so-called Surrealist poetry still has meaning. That is why his overtly meaningful poetry contains the seeds of a new destruction. He cannot see order without chaos and chaos without order.

A similar sort of process can be seen to be at work in Mann's and Kafka's writing as well. It is not exactly the same, but nevertheless this sort of reading of Cernuda's poetry can assist in allowing us to see the tension in their writing as far as meaning is concerned. There is an ambivalence: the chaos of non-meaning and the order of meaning are two separate and opposing poles, around *both* of which writers can circle continually, but not in any regular or predetermined fashion. How is this ambivalence seen in the early writings of Thomas Mann? Probably the literary technique that Mann employs which has received the greatest degree of critical attention is irony. While this is not an issue which really requires full-scale analysis any longer, there is one element which is worthy of mention in the present context. Mann comments, in *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, that his irony is 'Ironie nach beiden Seiten hin'[268]. As Nündel comments, 'Ironie ist zweideutig, mehrdeutig, sie ist die Haltung des Sowohl als Auch, der mittleren Schwebe'[269]. While there is no question that this irony relates to the way Mann explores his themes (his narrator stands back from the characters, taking a broad view which sees both sides of the situation, both positive and negative together), it is debatable if Mann ever actually meant this to refer to the nature of the meaning in his own works. The concept of what Nündel calls the 'mittlere Schwebe' is however peculiarly illustrative of the nature of meaning itself, as has been recognised in Cernuda's poetry. Irony as a technique may actually be indicative of confidence in one's own use of language[270] (it entails the reader seeing not merely one meaning, but two or more), but at

---

De la memoria, en vuestro corazón y vuestra mente.'

(Cernuda, *Poesía completa*, p. 547.) See also Douglas Barnette, 'Luis Cernuda y su Generación: La creación de una leyenda', *Revista de estudios hispánicos*, 18 (1984), 125-6.

[268]Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, p. 574.

[269]Nündel, p. 129.

[270]Walter A. Berendsohn stresses the 'confident' nature of irony, arguing that it is a 'Kunstmittel, um ... der Dichtung das anmutige Gleichgewicht, die gewinnende Schönheit zu geben' (*Thomas Mann: Künstler und Kämpfer in bewegter Zeit* (Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 1965), p. 247.

the same time the need to see two meanings can itself introduce a note of doubt, because where does the truth lie in such a situation[271]? The double perspective generally is however of greatest import here.

It is expedient to turn to concrete examples. If we consider *Buddenbrooks*, the two most prominent artist figures in it, such as they are, are Christian and his nephew Hanno. Christian is not really an artist at all, but a decadent dilettante; Hanno as an artist is weak and feeble: the music he invents at the piano is described as 'ein ganz einfaches Motiv ... ein Nichts'[272]. This art which fails to give form to the chaos is not really art, by Mann's definition of it, at all[273]. While this is admittedly music, not literature, what is important here is that, despite the fact that it is the very driving-force of Hanno's existence, it is entirely private, it has no audience. In short, it communicates nothing. Perhaps the fundamental problem of Hanno's art which is illustrated is the aspect which makes it decadent, i.e., its formlessness, its inability to communicate meaningfully and coherently. It is not a full-blown critique of artistic order, it is true (and hardly a critique of language and meaning), but this example of Hanno, placed as it is in a work which is written, as has been observed, as something inherently meaningful, nevertheless serves as a warning that this meaning is not something which can be taken entirely for granted.

More important are *Tonio Kröger* and *Der Tod in Venedig*. The fact that Aschenbach's 'anderthalb Seiten erlesener Prosa' are problematic has already been discussed. If we look at *Tonio Kröger*, then we find ourselves faced with the same difficulty: Tonio Kröger is supposedly a literary figure with at least one literary

---

[271]For a clear discussion of irony in *Buddenbrooks*, see for example Ridley, especially pp. 69-85. A detailed survey of the topic in Mann's work in general is to be found in Reinhart Baumgart, *Das Ironische und die Ironie in den Werken Thomas Manns*, 2nd ed. (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1966). Pütz meanwhile discusses Mann's irony (in *Tonio Kröger*) in terms of Nietzschean ideas of a 'Sprachkrise', arguing that 'die Gesamtheit aller Perspektiven' which Mann seeks to achieve through his use of irony produces 'ein System von Beziehungen und Entsprechungen, die sich ... zu einem ästethischen Kosmos bilden' (*Kunst und Künstlerexistenz*, pp. 72-3). See also Pütz, 'Thomas Mann und Nietzsche', in *Thomas Mann und die Tradition*, ed. Pütz (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1971), p. 246, and similarly Frizen, pp. 367-9. See also above, p. 282.) I reiterate however that the ironies here illustrate a predominantly confident use of language, and it is largely elsewhere that there are *hints* of possible doubts about language.

[272]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 763.

[273]See above, p. 219ff.

achievement behind him[274], but what is it? There is never, in the entire 'Novelle', one shred of concrete evidence as to what he has written. It only exists because the narrator says it does. This is again unsettling, because we are forced to read about something which only has meaning when it is read, and yet it cannot be read. This is not nearly as disturbing however as previous works which Aschenbach has written, about which we learn in chapter two of *Der Tod in Venedig*, including the following one:

> '... der Verfasser endlich ... der leidenschaftlichen Abhandlung über »Geist und Kunst«, deren ordnende Kraft und antithetische Beredsamkeit ernste Beurteiler vermochte, sie unmittelbar neben Schillers Raisonnement über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung zu stellen:'[275]

Reed's research into Mann's various literary projects between *Tonio Kröger* and *Der Tod in Venedig* argues that Aschenbach 'has completed all Thomas Mann's abandoned projects'[276]. While we have a little more information about these various works than about either Tonio Kröger's or Aschenbach's later 'anderthalb Seiten', they are still no more than the vaguest presence[277]. There is however the more disturbing fact that these are works which Mann himself was unable to complete. ('Geist und Kunst' in particular was planned by Mann with that very title.) While we should be careful not to exaggerate this, and while there is never the same degree of subtle interweaving as with Cernuda, nevertheless it raises questions about Aschenbach's work which cannot be ignored. Particularly ironic in the above quotation is the phrase 'ordnende Kraft', for it is presumably that which Mann lacked when he attempted to write the equivalent works, especially 'Geist und Kunst'. It would appear to be an attempt at a kind of 'vicarious experience' on Mann's part, living a 'better' life in his creation. Nevertheless, the narrator has created a work (and stressed its merit with some vigour) purely by saying it exists. In the real world, however, it is *literally* meaningless. At this point we collide once

---

[274]There is at least a suggestion that the book he looks at in the library on his return visit to Lübeck in chapter six is his own (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 316).

[275]Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 565.

[276]Reed, pp. 144-5.

[277]Even the story 'Ein Elender', about which we probably learn most (Mann, *Frühe Erzählungen*, p. 570), is only mentioned as a means of comparison with Aschenbach's own character, and in terms of substance we can only guess at it.

again with the problem of narrative perspective in the 'Novelle'. The narrator is certainly stressing the value of 'Geist und Kunst', but is Mann the author intentionally or unintentionally ironising his own inability to complete the essay? Is it a deliberate discrepancy between authorial and narratorial standpoint? Ultimately we cannot know: it is an unresolvable ambiguity. In either case, where the nature of meaning finds its fundamental problem is in the same place as with Cernuda's poetry: with the *reader*. These literary works fail to live 'en nuestra entraña'[278]. They are a semantic illusion. It is a very ironic double perspective: doubt in the very midst of affirmation, and irony which ironises the author himself (intentionally or unintentionally). In the midst of communication there is an inability to communicate.

Let us turn finally to an evaluation of Kafka's writing. Kafka writes from the perspective diametrically opposed to that of Thomas Mann, finding himself more or less incapable of believing in the inherent meaning of language. Unlike Cernuda, this anti-belief stayed with him throughout his life and literary career. There are at least two things which are worthy of analysis at this juncture. In the first place, if we recall Cernuda's 'A un poeta futuro', then the importance of the problematic relationship with the poet's future audience will be remembered. Kafka's relationship with posterity too is very problematic. He always had considerable diffidence about publishing his work (far more than did Cernuda), and his will instructed that his unpublished manuscripts were to be burnt[279]. Such an act is nothing less than the total destruction of meaning and literary order, even more final than Cernuda's fear that no-one would read it. It is not however so simple, for at precisely this point there re-appears the self-affirming aspect of Kafka's *œuvre*. If his desire had been genuine, he would, first, have burnt the manuscripts himself, or second, not entrusted the task to Max Brod, who he must have known would never carry out such a wish. In the midst of the inability to communicate the desire to

---

[278]As Dieter Rosenthal comments, not in this context, 'künstlerische Prosa ist ... Kommunikation zwischen Autor und Leser', ('Überlegungen zur strukturalen Analyse von Prosatexten mit einem Vergleich zwischen Thomas Manns "Buddenbrooks" und Heinrich Bölls "Billard um halbzehn"', *Germanica Wratislaviensia*, 40 (1980), 43).

[279]For further details of Kafka's will, see Politzer, *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox*, p. 294ff, or Joachim Unseld, *Franz Kafka: Ein Schriftstellerleben. Die Geschichte seiner Veröffentlichungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1984), p. 204.

communicate reasserts itself.

It is inappropriate however to limit the discussion to a biographical example. While it is true that Kafka is never really entirely clear in what he says (which is of course consistent with his attitudes towards writing), there are times when his writings are more overtly comprehensible than the highly enigmatic works such as *Der Prozeß* and *Das Schloß*. This is, at least at times, true of some of Kafka's aphorisms. There are two consecutive aphorisms which merit analysis here, the first, numbered 26, and the second, unnumbered, which Kafka had scored out in his original manuscript:

> 'Verstecke sind unzählige, Rettung nur eine, aber Möglichkeiten der Rettung wieder so viele wie Verstecke.
> Es gibt ein Ziel aber keinen Weg; was wir Weg nennen ist Zögern.'[280]

The concepts of 'Verstecke', 'Rettung', 'Ziel' and 'Weg' are in themselves comprehensible: we may not understand immediately if the writer of the first aphorism may prefer 'sich zu verstecken' or 'gerettet zu werden', but we still know what a 'hiding-place' and 'being saved' are. By the same token, we know what a 'goal' is, and we know that 'paths' lead to goals, although why there is none to this particular goal is again a matter of speculation. The problem is that both of these aphorisms lack *definite* terms of reference. So alongside this obvious meaning is non-meaning: the 'Rettung' is from what? Is it religious salvation? Physical salvation? What is the 'Ziel'? Something metaphysical? Something mundane? The words communicate something to us, but we are left to 'fill in the gaps', as it were, ourselves. As Cernuda's poetry has no meaning until it reaches 'tu entraña', so too is Kafka's work meaningless without a reader to attempt to supply the terms of reference. The problem is that once again there is no guarantee how it will live 'en nuestra entraña'[281]. It is the double perspective of the inability to dictate a precise meaning to the future reader, and yet at the same time the inability to remain

---

[280]Kafka, *Hochzeitsvorbereitungen*, p. 32.

[281]As Anne Golumb Hoffman remarks, 'we run the danger of becoming *Landvermessers* ourselves, in the sense of applying a wrongheaded measure, one which conflicts with the nature of that to which it is applied' ('Plotting the Landscape: Stories and Storytellers in *The Castle*', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 27 (1981), 306).

silent.

It is now possible to formulate more precisely the nature of the literary order in the works of Mann, Kafka and Cernuda. Meaning and non-meaning are interwoven. This is in effect a development of a principle in the best poetry of *Un río, un amor*: that it is neither one thing nor the other, but *both*. Kafka's work is overtly meaningless, dangerously close to Derrida's abyss of non-meaning; Mann's work is overtly meaningful, apparently untroubled by semantic crises. Cernuda's poetry, influenced by Surrealism, gravitates towards the pole of meaninglessness and Kafka, but then subsequently gravitates very strongly (and the element of contradiction should *not* be underestimated) towards meaningfulness and Mann. Closer investigation can however reveal greater unity: Mann, apparently at the pinnacle of meaningful literary representation, depicts 'artists' who communicate nothing. Moreover, when he looks towards the reader, he does so with apparent confidence, and yet it is at that very point that he casts doubt and leaves gaps which the reader cannot fill, where meaning cannot be created. Kafka, never telling us exactly what to think, gives us enough to create our own terms of reference, only to leave a new problem: that there is no control over those terms of reference. The works may therefore become meaningful, or meaningless, or somewhere in between. Cernuda finally does all of this: meaningless poetry which somehow still tries to create a meaning, and meaningful poetry which runs the risk of dying in our hands. In short, modern meaning as expressed by these three writers is chaotic order — meaning which stands on precarious foundations — *and* ordered chaos — non-meaning which desperately tries to build or rebuild its foundations. And *we* as readers have ultimately to act to bring order too.

Conclusion

'Order in a world of chaos': to lose faith in God as the ultimate ordering force behind the universe is to be confronted with a world which has no ultimate purpose, where the concept of 'absolute order' has no significance. Since the existence of God (or any kind of Absolute) cannot be proved (or disproved) by rational argument, both theism and atheism can only be matters of individual belief. What has characterised the modern age has been a gradual falling away from faith in God, either to active atheism or to a more complacent disregard for religious matters. This loss of faith has found its expression in literature, and is a prominent feature of the writings of Mann, Kafka and Cernuda.

There is little to be gained from replicating the arguments of the four chapters of this thesis here. There are however certain crucial aspects which should be borne in mind. In the first place, the loss of faith in an Absolute, in transcendent order, is paramount. Furthermore, the decline from order into chaos is seen as irrevocable in the work of all three authors: in Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, for example, the dynasty declines inexorably, destroying the male line, and even the narrator shows himself to be sceptical of Sesemi Weichbrodt's faith in the afterlife[1]. In the writings of Kafka and Cernuda, the age of order can be represented as no more than a distant, primitive, almost mythical 'Golden Age', totally divorced from the contemporary world. For all three writers, this is a world of chaos.

The response to the 'world of chaos' is what then comes to the fore. Clearly there are two principal options: either to face despair, or to seek order and attempt to make life once more make sense. There is certainly despair present in the writings we have studied, but there is also a desire to conquer this despair. In all of the attempts to find order, however, what is always apparent is the continuing threat of chaos. On the one hand, there is a desire to find an Absolute, but the quest ends in failure. On the other hand, there is a desire for order within this world, but, when it is sought in 'love', there is above all the problem of the chaos of base eroticism. Similarly, when order is sought in art, attempting to produce art can alienate the artist from life, and the experience of art is

---

[1]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 774. See also above, p. 29.

at best only temporary. Furthermore, the ability to create literary order is fraught with the problems of the very meaning of the words which the writer uses.

The coexistence of order and chaos: that is what seems to be a hallmark of the writing of Mann, Kafka and Cernuda. What we witness in their writing is a stance of ambivalence and ambiguity. We are presented with a variety of problems, we see the various attempts to find solutions, but those solutions are not definitive. (Indeed, these attempts can lead to a greater degree of chaos than before[2].) What their art seeks to do is to bring together in literary form the two opposing poles of order and chaos, where the dialectic itself is portrayed, even though there may be no end to the tension which exists between them. The lack of definitive solutions may ultimately be a source of despair, but if nothing else there is always the honesty of a picture which does not shrink from seeing both sides of the situation.

It could be argued that such conclusions could be reached from an analysis of Mann's, Kafka's and Cernuda's writing in isolation. What have we gained from studying the three together? Certain things are very clear: however much their writing might have originated in their personal lives, their themes transcend, not just personal boundaries, but cultural ones as well. Furthermore, comparison of Mann and Kafka with Cernuda has demonstrated how different and even opposing ideas are held together in Cernuda's poetry. Mann and Kafka are ostensibly very different writers, and yet there are thematic links between Cernuda's poetry and their prose. This in turn underscores, not only the complexity of Cernuda's poetic vision, but also the way his poetry is attempting to hold together apparent contradictions and tensions without trying to find either compromises or definitive solutions. On the other hand, if we then compare Cernuda with Mann and Kafka, do we not find that the apparent gulf between Mann and Kafka is not so wide after all? While there are undeniably overt differences of style (Mann's world is 'realistic', a world with which we can identify, whereas Kafka's is 'unrealistic', where the bizarre and senseless are frequent events), concentrating on a third writer whose work unites their

---

[2]Perhaps the prime example of this is Aschenbach's disastrous quest for order in love in his encounter with Tadzio.

ideas can help us to focus more precisely the extent to which they are in fact confronting and dealing with similar issues and problems.

There is one thing which follows from this process of bringing together and interweaving differing and conflicting ideas, and that relates to the style of writing. The style copes with these contradictions by allowing them to coexist, but also, and more fundamentally, by *reflecting* the tension in the use of language itself. Language which appears meaningless, and yet which is still communicating something; language which is apparently meaningful, and yet which, simultaneously, communicates uncertainty about itself. *That* is the culmination of the process of decline from order into chaos, *and* of the search for order in a world of chaos. Within literature, it is language which is obviously paramount: the uncertainties about language mirror and parallel the crisis of faith, while the finding of a literary form parallels the search for order in life. While the first-hand experience of the search for order in the lives of Mann's and Kafka's protagonists and Cernuda's personae must remain limited to the lives of those protagonists and personae, the literary form which expresses it reaches out directly towards *us*. But that leaves us with a question: how will it live 'en *nuestra* entraña'?

Appendix

Translations of Quotations

PP. 7-8, Note 5: 'And recently I heard him speak this word: "God is dead; God died from his sympathy with people."'[1]

'God is dead! God remains dead!'

P. 8, Note 6: '*Mine is the doctrine of the superman.* Man is something to be overcome.'

P. 8: 'Paradise is locked.'

PP. 8-9, Note 11: 'But, my friend, we have come too late. True, the gods are living, but above our heads, up there in a different world.'[2]

P. 9: 'The Lord God above has died.'

P. 9, Note 13: 'And raising my anxious gaze heavenwards
I seek your Father in the immense space,
like the pilot in the storm seeking
the light of the lighthouse which guides him into port.'

P. 9: 'heaven' 'scowling in fury'

P. 9, Note 14: 'the No with which Eternity replies to his prayer'

P. 9, Note 15: 'fear of immortality'

---

[1]Where possible and appropriate, published translations have been used. Any unacknowledged translations are my own.

[2]Hölderlin, *Selected Verse*, p. 111.

Chapter One

P. 15: ‘“Work and pray.”’[3]

‘Everything was carefully entered, with an almost reverent observation of facts, ... for was not the least of them the will and work of God, who wonderfully guided the destinies of the family?’[4]

P. 16: ‘Life was harsh: and business, with its ruthless unsentimentality, was an epitome of life.’[5]

P. 17: ‘“And clothes and shoes,” [Antonie] said, “meat and drink, hearth and home, wife and child, acre and cow...” But old Johann Buddenbrook could hold in no longer. He burst out laughing, ... in his glee at being able to make fun of the Catechism. He had probably put the child through this little examination with no other end in view.’[6]

P. 18: ‘“Upon my word,” the old man said, “I still feel angry with myself that I have never put it into some kind of order. ... It would be a pretty bit of property, if the grass were cut and the trees trimmed into formal shapes.”’[7]

P. 19: ‘“No, no — we of the younger generation do not see why we should revere the man who murdered the Duc d’Enghien, and butchered eight hundred prisoners in Egypt. ...”

“All that is probably exaggerated and overdrawn,” said pastor Wunderlich. “... as for the prisoners, their execution was probably the deliberate [lit.: carefully considered] and necessary policy of a council of war.”’[8]

P. 20: ‘“Lead her, O Lord, in Thy ways, give her a pure heart ... For inasmuch as our weak human hearts are prone to forget Thy priceless gift of the sweet, blessed Jesus...”’[9]

‘“I must advise you not to give in.”’[10]

P. 22: ‘Madame Buddenbrook breathed her last brief, effortless sigh; ... But old Johann did not weep. He only gave the same gentle, bewildered head-shake, and said, with the same half-smiling look: “Strange, strange!” It became his most frequent expression. Plainly, the time for old Johann too was near at hand.’[11]

P. 22, Note 18: ‘[His old wife] had never given him either a great joy or a great sorrow;’[12]

P. 23: ‘The deceased Consul’s fanatical love of God and of the Saviour had been an

---

[3]Mann, *Buddenbrooks: Decline of a Family*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (London: Secker and Warburg, 1956), p. 7.

[4]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 130.

[5]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 386.

[6]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 3.

[7]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, pp. 21-2.

[8]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, pp. 19-20.

[9]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 42.

[10]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 38.

[11]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 57.

[12]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 57.

emotion foreign to his forbears, who never cherished other than the normal, every-day sentiments proper to good citizens.'[13]

PP. 23-4: '"I love to go out there in the summer and walk in the undergrowth; it would quite spoil the place to trim and prune its free natural beauty ... when I go out there and lie in the long grass among the undergrowth, I have a feeling that I belong to nature and not she to me..."'[14]

P. 24: 'The hardest thing [Tony] had to bear was the increasing piety of her parents' home. The Consul's religious fervour grew upon him in proportion as he himself felt the weight of years and infirmity; and his wife, too, as she got older, began to find the spiritual side to her taste.'[15]

P. 25, Note 25: 'The godly patrician house in Meng Street, where, by the way, such good dinners were to be had,'[16]

P. 25: 'The worldly scepticism of his grandfather had been more nearly his own attitude. But the comfortable superficiality of old Johann could not satisfy his metaphysical and spiritual needs,'[17]

P. 26, Note 29: 'he strikingly resembled his grandfather in the eyes and the shape of the face.'[18]

P. 27: 'And indeed the noise which the band was making, the buzz of voices, the sight of all these people gathered in his honour, did shake his nerves; did, together with his memories of the past and of his father, give rise in him to a sort of weak emotionalism. But a sense of the ridiculous, of the disagreeable, hung over it all —'[19]

'"If Father were alive, if he were here in this room, he would fold his hands and commend us to the mercy of God."'[20]

P. 28: '"There will be a reunion,"'[21]

'"It *is so*!" she said, with her whole strength; and looked at them all with a challenge in her eyes.

She stood there, a victor in the good fight ...: hump-backed, tiny, quivering with the strength of her convictions, a little prophetess, admonishing and inspired.'[22]

P. 29: '"Be happy, you go-od che-ild!"'[23]

---

[13]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 214.
[14]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 22.
[15]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 198.
[16]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 198.
[17]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 523.
[18]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 10.
[19]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 403.
[20]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 357.
[21]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 604.
[22]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 604.
[23]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 292.

P. 31: 'As soon as he began to think of his mortal end not as an indefinite remote event, almost a contingency, but as something near and tangible for which it behoved him to prepare, he began to investigate himself, to examine his relations to death and questions of another world. And his earliest researches in this kind discovered in himself an irremediable unpreparedness.'[24]

P. 31, Note 46: 'Where there is in any form a decrease in the will to power, there is always also a physical deterioration, *décadence*.'

P. 33: 'Cases of typhoid fever take the following course.

The patient feels depressed and moody — a condition which grows rapidly worse until it amounts to acute despondency, etc.'[25]

P. 37: 'Direct intercourse with the authorities was not particularly difficult then, for well organized as they might be, all they did was to guard the distant and invisible interests of distant and invisible masters, while K. fought for something vitally near to him, for himself,'[26]

P. 38: '... powers ... in which ... he was permitted [lit.: was able] to believe'[27]

PP. 40-1: '"How we all absorbed the look of transfiguration on the face of the sufferer, how we bathed our cheeks in the radiance of that justice, achieved at last and fading so quickly! What times these were, my comrade!"'[28]

P. 42: 'the power of song'[29]

'nothing out of the ordinary'[30]

'Is it in fact singing at all? Although we are unmusical we have a tradition of singing; in the old days our people did sing [lit.: there was song]; this is mentioned in legends and some songs have actually survived, which, it is true, no one can now sing. Thus we have an inkling of what singing is, and Josephine's art does not really correspond to it.'[31]

PP. 42-3, Note 77: '... opposition, with which I too am half in sympathy'[32]

PP. 43-4: 'But after a little the man volunteered: "If you like, I'll take you in my sledge." "Please do," said K. delighted, "what is your charge?" "Nothing," said the man. K. was very surprised. "Well, you're the Land Surveyor," explained the man, "and you belong to the Castle." ... His whole behaviour had the appearance of springing not from any special desire to be friendly but rather from a kind of selfish, worried, and almost pedantic insistence on shifting K. away from the front of the house.'[33]

---

[24]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 523.

[25]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 598.

[26]Kafka, *The Castle*, trans. Edwin and Willa Muir (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1957), p. 59.

[27]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 59.

[28]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (London: Minerva, 1992), p. 154.

[29]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 360.

[30]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 361.

[31]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 361.

[32]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 362.

[33]Kafka, *The Castle*, pp. 21-2.

P. 45, Note 82: 'A cage went in search of a bird.'

P. 45: 'Previously I did not understand why I got no answer to my question, now I do not understand how I could believe that I could ask. But I did not believe at all, I just asked.'

P. 46: 'Somebody was astonished how easily he went the way of eternity; he rushed down it.'

P. 47: 'in the old days some people did sing'[34]

'And the officer seized the explorer by both arms and gazed, breathing heavily, into his face. He had shouted the last sentence so loudly that even the soldier and the condemned man were startled into attending;'[35]

P. 48: 'In the writer's earlier works the power which is portrayed is not, or hardly, questioned as far as its rightfulness and unlimited validity are concerned; it is accorded unconditional recognition and submission. Gradually it is then exposed to increasing scepticism and leaves the reader and the hero uncertain whether it is to be recognised or rejected.'

P. 49: '"My death ship lost its way; a wrong turn of the wheel, ... I cannot tell what it was; I only know this, that I remained on earth and that ever since my ship has sailed earthly waters. So I ... travel after my death through all the lands of the earth."

"And you have no part in the other world?" asked the Burgomaster, knitting his brow.

"I am forever," replied the Hunter, "on the great stair that leads up to it."'[36]

P. 50: '"I am here, more than that I do not know, further than that I cannot go. My ship has no rudder, and it is driven by the wind that blows in the undermost regions of death."'[37]

P. 51: 'He comes home in the evening tired from work and just when he is in need of some rest he is faced with this surprise. ... No doubt he will destroy the balls, and that in the near future, but not just yet, probably not until tomorrow. If one looks at the whole thing with an unprejudiced eye, the balls behave modestly enough.'[38]

P. 52, Note 103: '"But, sir." cried Gregor, beside himself and in his agitation forgetting everything else, "I'm just going to open the door this very minute. A slight illness, an attack of giddiness, has kept me from getting up, etc."'[39]

PP. 52-3: '[His father] advanced with a grim visage toward Gregor. Likely enough he did not himself know what he meant to do; at any rate he lifted his feet uncommonly high, and Gregor was dumbfounded at the enormous size of his shoe soles. ... And so he ran

---

[34]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 361.

[35]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 159.

[36]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 228.

[37]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 230.

[38]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 188.

[39]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 96.

before his father, stopping when he stopped ...'[40]

P. 53: '"... for me you're only one man." They considered this, and said: "We shouldn't like that at all." "I don't suppose so," said K.; "of course you won't like it, but that's how it has to be."'[41]

P. 54: 'You're afraid of freedom and responsibility. Therefore you suffocate behind the bars which you have built for yourself.'

P. 56: 'But you're spoiled.
No, I need a room and vegetarian meals, practically nothing else.
Are you going because of F.?
No, I'm choosing Berlin purely for the above reasons, although I do love it because of F. and because of the circle of people around F. I can't control that.'

P. 56, Note 119: 'What do you want to do? ... Leave your job? ... What do you want to do?'

P. 57, Note 121: 'I exist, well I know it:
The world to my senses
Clearly reveals
Its amorous presence.

But I don't want these walls,
Air unfaithful to itself,
Or these branches that sing
In air which sleeps.'[42]

P. 58: 'I am the memory of a man;
Then, nothing. Divine,
Shadow and light keep going
With the earth which spins.'[43]

P. 59: 'The presence of cold next to invisible fear
Freezes in dark drops the blood amongst the mist,
Amongst the living mist, towards the vague mist
Through a blind space of rigid spines.'

'It also seeks grief, errant in the night,
Following the fleeting shadow of some defenceless pleasure;
And its pale silent steps become intertwined,
Incessant phantasm with a look of disgust.'

P. 60: 'Yes, the earth is alone; alone it sings, it speaks,
With a voice so weak that heaven does not catch it;
It sings laughter or feathers crossing space

---

[40]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 121.

[41]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 25.

[42]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, ed. and trans. Anthony Edkins and Derek Harris (New York: New York University, 1971), p. 7.

[43]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 7.

Under a burning sun reflected on the sand.'

P. 62: 'You are dreaming, beautiful and beaten,
Your blind eyes turned towards the heavens,
Regarding the remote ages
Of titanic man;
Their love gave you gentle garlands
And the fragrant flame rose up
Towards the divine light, its celestial sister.

Creatures, devoted and free, moved as water moves,
A reflection of your truth;'[44]

P. 64: 'They [the creatures] believed in you [the gods] and you existed;
Life was not a sombre frenzy.'[45]

P. 65: 'Idyllic place
Of such primeval sweetness,
Worthy native place of the gods.
But what cold cloudy sky
Arises lightly,
In ashen, speeding squalls?
Some secret voices
Offend this joy
From a distant greyness;
With sterile power
They spread out past springs,
As far as the one which now breathes
A tender fragrance which sighs.'

P. 66: 'Silence. Already the lights
Which shone are diminishing.
...
And what invisible wall
Raises seriously
Its most sad frontier?
The sky no longer sings,
Neither is its celestial eternity present
For the light and the roses,
But instead for the nocturnal horror of things.'

P. 68, Note 146: 'How distant all of that. Dead
The roses which opened yesterday,'

PP. 68-9: 'The fresh and tapered
Breeze moves through space
And unfolds a Spring,
Singing in the leaves.

---

[44]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 47.

[45]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 47.

Against the limpid
Abyss of the sky,
Like early joys, first
Swallows greet the eye.

One lone tree disturbs
The sleeping distance,
Thus fervor alerts
Present indolence.'[46]

PP. 69-70: 'Yes, the earth is alone; alone it sings, it speaks,
With a voice so weak that heaven does not catch it;
It sings laughter or feathers crossing space
Under a burning sun reflected on the sand.'

P. 70: 'The blood stops in the stone limbs
Like the enemy sea fixing on to shady coral,
Like frozen coral in the broken body,
In the night without light, in the sky without anybody.'

P. 71: 'Meanwhile, the poet, in the autumn night,
Under the white lunatic ecstasy
Gazes at the branches,
Piously whitening themselves with light
As their greenness abandons them;
He dreams of your golden throne
Of your blinding countenance,
Far away from man,
Out there in the impenetrable heavens.'[47]

'Pity us for once, listen to the murmur
That rises like a wave
And rolls to the foot of your divine indifference.'[48]

P. 72: 'The nameless torment
Is no longer either life or death,
It is a fallen world
Where anger whistles.

It is a raging sea,
Clamour of all space,
Voice which from itself raises
The wings of a posthumous god.'

P. 73, Note 160: 'The condemned twist/Their bodies'

P. 74: 'It was perhaps a murdered bird;

---

[46]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 3.

[47]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 49.

[48]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, ed. and trans. Reginald Gibbons (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), p. 91.

No-one knows. By no-one
Or by someone perhaps sad on the stones,
In the walls of the sky.

But no-one knows anything about that today.
Only a gentle shaking of lights,
A colour of glances on the waves or in the breeze;
Also, perhaps, a fear.
Everything, it is true, insecure.'

P. 75: 'Someone spoke of a new birth.
But there was no mother's blood, no fertile womb
With pain creating the new painful life;
Only broad cerements, yellow strips of linen,
Heavy in smell, laid bare
Gray flesh, soft like a sleepy fruit;
Not the smooth dark body, rose of the desire,
But the body of a son of death.'[49]

P. 76: '[the] mistake of being alive'[50]

'To me the bread was bitter, the fruit tasteless,
The water tepid, the bodies without desire;
The name of "brother" sounded false
And of love's image there was left
Nothing but vague memories under the wind.
He knew that all was dead in me, that I
Was a dead man, walking among the dead.'[51]

P. 77: 'As a child he possessed a blind religious faith. He wanted to do good, ... because of an instinct to follow a fine order established by God ... But with his childish idea of God there mixed insidiously that of eternity. And sometimes in bed, ... in the house's morning silence, he was assailed by fear of eternity, of limitless time.

The word always, applied to the consciousness of the spiritual being which there was in him, filled him with terror, ... He felt his life attacked by two enemies, one in front and the other behind, without wanting to go forward and without being able to go back. This, if it had been possible, is what he would have preferred: to go back, to return to that vague region without memory from whence he had come into the world.'

PP. 78-9: 'As if time had confused
The thread of its days,
Are you by chance living out somebody else's?
Life is a stranger to you.

Far from yourself, from your consciousness
In disarray, you search
For the center out there among things
Momentarily present.'[52]

---

[49]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 55.

[50]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 57.

[51]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 59.

PP. 79-80: 'Today that intruder is yourself,
Where before it was that somebody else;
Joylessly you now start to get them
Used to each other.

In order to reach the one who is not you,
The one you are not guides you,
While friend is stranger,
And the rose is the thorn.'[53]

P. 80, Note 185: 'To come to where you are not,
You have to go where you are not.'

P. 80: 'Dawn was breaking, red in the distance
Behind the olive trees and hills;
The air was calm, but the bodies trembled
Like branches in the wind,
Flickered from the dark, stretched out their arms
To offer their barren toil.'[54]

P. 81: 'The name of "brother" sounded false'[55]

'So did I ask with tears for
Strength to bear my ignorance with resignation,
To work neither for my life nor for my spirit
But for a truth I had half seen in those eyes
Then. Beauty is patience. I
Know that the lily of the field
...
Will one day blossom in triumphant glory.'[56]

---

[52]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 115.
[53]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 115.
[54]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 55.
[55]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 59.
[56]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 59.

Chapter Two

P. 85: 'inexpressibly weary and disgusted'[57]

P. 86: 'What strengthened in him was the conviction ... that the end was close at hand. ... Sometimes at table it seemed to him that he was no longer sitting with his family,'[58]

'he ended by finding in evolution the answer to all his questions about eternity and immortality. He said to himself that he had lived in his forbears and would live on in his descendants. ... But now, before the near and penetrating eye of death, it fell away; it was nothing,'[59]

P. 87: 'As soon as he began to think of his mortal end ... as something near and tangible ... he began ... to examine his relations to death and questions of another world.'[60]

P. 88: 'immortality'[61]

'"unravel the riddle"'[62]

'having to arrange everything'[63]

'But this very alternation of vagueness and clarity, of dull incomprehension with sudden bursts of light, kept him enthralled and breathless,'[64]

P. 89: 'Thomas Buddenbrook had played ... with an inclination to Catholicism. But he was at bottom, none the less, the born Protestant: full of the true Protestant's passionate, relentless sense of personal responsibility. No, in the ultimate things there was, there could be, no help from outside, no mediation, no absolution, no soothing-syrup, no panacea.'[65]

P. 90: 'His was the gratification of the sufferer who has always had a bad conscience about his sufferings and concealed them from the gaze of a harsh, unsympathetic world, until suddenly, from the hand of an authority, he receives, as it were, justification and licence for his suffering —'[66]

P. 91: 'I shall be in all those who have ever, do ever, or ever shall say "I" — *especially, however, in all those who say it most fully, potently, and gladly!*'[67]

P. 92: 'His brain stood still, the vision was quenched. Suddenly there was nothing more

---

[57]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 493.
[58]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 522.
[59]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 523.
[60]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 523.
[61]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 523.
[62]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 523.
[63]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 524.
[64]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 525.
[65]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 523.
[66]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 524.
[67]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 527.

— he lay in dumb darkness.'[68]

P. 92, Note 28: 'And thus Thomas Buddenbrook, ... sank now weakly back to the images and conceptions of his childhood. He strove to call back that personal God, ... Yes, he strove to subscribe to the whole confused unconvincing story, which required no intelligence, only obedient credulity; and which, when the last anguish came, would sustain one in a firm and childlike faith. — But would it, really?'[69]

P. 93: '"Whether I was discourteous or not I can't say," said K. ..., "but that I had other things to think of than polite behaviour is true enough, for my existence is at stake, which is threatened by a scandalous official bureaucracy"'[70]

P. 94: '"I'm afraid, too, that the life at the Castle wouldn't suit me. I like to be my own master."' [lit.: "I always want to be free."][71]

P. 95: '"... the sacrifice I made in leaving my home, the long and difficult journey, the well-grounded hopes I built on my engagement here, my complete lack of means, the impossibility after this of finding some other suitable job at home, and last but not least my fiancée,"'[72]

P. 96: '"It is a job like any other, but for you it is heaven,"'[73]

P. 97: '"In the name of Klamm into the stall with you,"'[74]

'Klamm's will'[75]

'up on the hill everything soared light and free into the air,'[76]

P. 98: '"Frankly it isn't [the control authorities'] function to hunt out errors in the vulgar sense, for errors don't happen, and even when once in a while an error does happen, as in your case, who can say finally that it's an error?"'[77]

'"Why should I [know the count]?" replied the teacher in a low tone, and added aloud in French: "Please remember that there are innocent children present."'[78]

P. 99: 'There was only one tower as far as he could see, ... Swarms of crows were circling round it.

With his eyes fixed on the Castle K. went on farther, thinking of nothing else at all. But on approaching it he was disappointed in the Castle; it was after all only a

---

[68]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 528.

[69]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 529.

[70]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 89.

[71]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 13.

[72]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 75.

[73]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 291.

[74]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 44.

[75]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 53.

[76]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 15.

[77]Kafka, *The Castle*, pp. 66-7.

[78]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 16.

wretched-looking town,'[79]

P. 100: 'When K. looked at the Castle, often it seemed to him as if he were observing someone who sat quietly there in front of him gazing, not lost in thought and so oblivious of everything, but free and untroubled,'[80]

P. 101: 'But Bürgel ... smiled, as though he had just succeeded in misleading K. a little.'[81]

P. 101, Note 55: 'The mention of the two interrogations — particularly of that with Erlanger —'[82]

PP. 101-2: '"For he's reported as having one appearance when he comes into the village and another on leaving it; after having his beer he looks different from what he does before it, ... — he's almost another person up in the Castle. ... Now of course all these differences aren't the result of magic, but can be easily explained; they depend on the mood of the observer, on the degree of his excitement, on the countless graduations of hope or despair which are possible for him when he sees Klamm,"'[83]

P. 102: '"And yet you'll find people in the village who swear that Momus is Klamm, he and no other. That's how people work their own confusion."'[84]

P. 104, Note 60: '"... the sacrifice I made in leaving my home, the long and difficult journey,"'[85]

P. 104: 'So he resumed his walk, but the way proved long. For the street he was in, the main street of the village, did not lead up to the Castle hill, it only made towards it and then, as if deliberately, turned aside, and though it did not lead away from the Castle it got no nearer to it either.'[86]

P. 105: '"When anybody calls up the Castle from here ... they would all ring if practically all the departments — I know it for a certainty — didn't leave their receivers off. Now and then, however, a fatigued official may feel the need of a little distraction, ... and may hang the receiver on. Then we get an answer, but an answer of course that's merely a practical joke."'[87]

P. 106: '"[This slowness in the Castle] can mean that the matter's being considered, but it can also mean that it hasn't yet been taken up, and in the long run it can also mean that the whole thing has been settled,"'[88]

'for it was not Klamm's environment in itself that seemed to him worth striving for, but rather that he, K., ... should attain to Klamm, and should attain to him not to rest with

---

[79]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 15.
[80]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 97.
[81]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 247.
[82]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 270.
[83]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 167.
[84]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 172.
[85]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 75.
[86]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 17.
[87]Kafka, *The Castle*, pp. 73-4.
[88]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 164.

him, but to go on beyond him, farther yet, into the Castle.'[89]

P. 107: '"You've snatched Frieda from the happiest state she had ever known, ... She rescued you ... and sacrificed herself in doing so."'[90]

P. 108: '"... hostage which can only be ransomed at a great price."'[91]

'... to find other people who were at least externally much in the same situation as himself,'[92]

'"This change, if it is a change and not deception ... is connected with your arrival here,"'[93]

P. 109: 'they embraced each other, ... in a state of unconsciousness which K. tried again and again but in vain to master ... they lay among the small puddles of beer and other refuse gathered on the floor. There, hours went past, ... hours in which K. was haunted by the feeling that he was losing himself or wandering into a strange country, ... where one might die of strangeness,'[94]

'...too troubled also in his happiness, for it seemed to him that in letting Frieda go he would lose all he had.'[95]

P. 110: '"the necessary barrier between the applicants and the officials ... weakens"'[96]

'as though he had just succeeded in misleading K. a little.'[97]

'"something of this kind dawns on me: it is as if we had both striven too intensely, too noisily, too childishly, with too little experience, to get something that for instance with Frieda's calm and Frieda's matter-of-factness can be got easily and without much ado. We have tried to get it by crying, by scratching, by tugging —"'[98]

P. 110, Note 81: 'He almost enjoyed the feeling of being in the midst of this bustle,'[99]

P. 112: 'The "No" of the answer was audible even to K. at his table. But the answer went on and was still more explicit, it ran as follows: "Neither to-morrow nor at any other time."'[100]

PP. 112-3: 'it seemed to K. as if at last those people had broken off all relations with him,

---

[89]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 109.
[90]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 57.
[91]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 148.
[92]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 167.
[93]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 215.
[94]Kafka, *The Castle*, pp. 45-6.
[95]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 46.
[96]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 246.
[97]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 247.
[98]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 293.
[99]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 258.
[100]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 25.

and as if now in reality he were freer than he had ever been, ...; but ... as if at the same time there was nothing more senseless, nothing more helpless, than this freedom, this waiting, this inviolability.'[101]

P. 113: '... direct and serious gaze, which was unflinching and perhaps a little stupid.'[102]

'[Her gaze] was never levelled exactly on the object she regarded but ... always a little past it, ... a persistent and dominating desire for isolation,'[103]

P. 114: '"But Amalia not only suffered, she had the understanding to see her suffering clearly, we saw only the effects, but she knew the cause, ... She stood face to face with the truth and went on living and endured her life then as now."'[104]

P. 115: 'Half my life is over.'[105]

P. 116: 'As the laborer who sees his work destroyed
Turns his eyes to the sky in hopes of rain,
I too want to await some godly tears
That might revive my harvest in this uncertain hour.'[106]

P. 116, Note 102: 'Fantastic worker,
I think about the fields. Lord,
how good are thy workings! Drop, drop
Thy rain, slight and constant,
Upon green barley and bean crops,
Thy silent rain,
Upon vineyards and olive-groves.'

PP. 116-7: 'Through my own grief, I understand that others suffer
More than I, the silent ones who have no leisure
To hurl their tortured sufferings toward heaven.
But I cannot mimic their energetic silence;
Friendless, homeless, I am eased
By this solace of the voice,
In the deep solitude of one who has
Nothing in his arms but the air around him,'[107]

P. 117, Note 104: 'A thousand times I am silent, wanting to rend
The sky with my shouting, and as many times I try
To give my tongue, which I see
Lying in mortal silence, voice and movement.'

PP. 117-8: 'Men who sleep
And God awakes from a sleep of centuries.

---

[101]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 105.

[102]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 37.

[103]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 159.

[104]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 197.

[105]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 87.

[106]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 87.

[107]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 89.

May fires be lit on the mountains,
The rapid fire bearing the news
To the boundaries of tributary kingdoms.
At dawn I must leave.'

P. 118: 'We are following an uncertain star, ...
...
We are seeking truth, although abstract truths are unnecessary,
A dreamer's luxury,'

P. 119: 'A virgin body next to the bed, naked, fearful, awaits
The arms of the lover, when in the small hours pleasure penetrates and hurts.
This is life. What do truth and power matter alongside this?'

'Behold these sad stones we bear on our backs
Already, to bury the gifts you have given us.
Beauty, justice, truth — only you
Could instill in us their impossible travail.'[108]

P. 120: 'Like a dream of stone, of silent music,
From the erect arrow of the tower
To the surface of wide grey flagstones,
The cathedral appears ecstatic,
All is at rest: glass, wood, bronze,
Pure fervour in the shadow of the centuries.'

'Here living men find peace,
Peace from hatred, peace from love,
Sweet, long oblivion where the weary body
Bathes itself in the twilight.'

P. 121: 'There is neither struggle nor fear, there is neither pain nor desire.
Everything remains accepted up until death
And forgotten after death, contemplating,
Free from the body, and adoring,
Necessity of the soul exempt from joy.'

P. 121, Note 117: 'I want to live with myself.
I want to enjoy the good which I owe heaven,
Alone, unwitnessed,
Free of love, ardour,
Hate, hope, fear.'

P. 121, Note 119: 'But I don't want these walls,
Air unfaithful to itself,
Or these branches that sing
In air which sleeps.

As a horizon
For my mute glory, I want
Your arms'[109]

---

[108]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 91.

P. 122: 'The dying fields'

'A lost Eden'

'friendly hands'

'It is hard to find oneself alone
Amongst [living] bodies.
But this form has
Its love: the empty cross.'

P. 123: 'I hope through this love,
Waking in its lap,
To find on a pure dawn
Communion with men.'

'There is only power in God, in God alone is joy lasting;
The strong sea is his arm, the cheerful light his smile.'

P. 124: 'Abandon gold and perfumes, since gold is heavy and fragrances decay.
Where truth shines naked, nothing is required.'

'Pity us for once, listen to the murmur
That rises like a wave
And rolls to the foot of your divine indifference.'[110]

P. 125: 'Oh God. You who have made us
To die, why did you instil in us
The thirst for eternity, which makes the poet?
Can you let, century after century,
The sons of light fall like thistle-down, destroyed by a puff of wind,
Into mean darkness?'

'No voice responds to man's grief.'

'If they [beauty, truth, justice] were to die today, you would be blotted out
From memory, a dim dream of dead men.'[111]

P. 126: '"That's how people work their own confusion."'[112]

'But you do not exist. You are only the name
Which man gives to his fear and impotence,'

P. 128: 'Like nomadic shepherds, when the sword of winter wounds them,
We are following an uncertain star, crossing deserts by night,
Camping by day by the wall of some dead city,

---

[109]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 7.

[110]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 91.

[111]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 91.

[112]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 172.

Where jackals howl: while, in the land we abandoned,
Our sceptres are bid for,'

PP. 128-9: 'I hope through this love,
Waking in its lap,
To find on a pure dawn
Communion with men.

But light leaves the countryside.
It is late and cold is being born.
The door is closed,
The lamp is being lit.

Through the shadowy paths
The wind now moans
Like an isolated struggling soul.
The night will be short.'

P. 130: 'The woman was holding a child in her arms.
We hoped for a god, a radiant and imperious
Presence, the very sight of whom would signify grace,
And being denied his presence would be identical to the night
Of the jealous lover without the beloved.'

'We found a life like our human one,
Crying pitifully, with eyes which looked
In pain, under the weight of his soul
Subjected to the destiny of souls,'

'as if the rich offering
Could make him into a god.'

P. 131: 'I love the garden, when the serene autumn flowers open,
The sound of the trees, whose peaks are gilded by the restful light,'

'I am alive'

'One died on his way home, far from his homeland;
Another, having lost his throne, became a slave, or a beggar;
The other living alone, prisoner of sadness.'

P. 132, Note 152: 'Hidden within walls
This garden offers me
The secret delights
Of its branches and water.'[113]

P. 132: 'To feel again, like then,
The sharp spine of desire,
While youth which is past
Returns. Dream of a god without time.'

---

[113]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 11.

P. 133, Note 154: 'the awareness
That there your life had its summit.'

P. 133: 'Delight, power, thought
Rest here. The fever has already gone.'

P. 135: 'And on entering the hut the kings discovered
The misery of man, of which they did not know previously.

Then, like someone fleeing, they started for home.
The travellers also went off to other lands
With their child in their arms. I do not know anything about them.
Suns and moons have passed. I was young. I am old.

...

They were looking for a new god, and people say that they found him.
I have only seen men; I have never seen gods.'

'They sought truth, but on finding it
They did not believe in it'

P. 136: 'He[114] is born. Coldness,
Shadows, death,
All human helplessness
Is his fate.'

'so weak
In the face our deception.'

P. 137: 'But you do not exist. You are only the name
Which man gives to his fear and impotence,
And life without you is like
These beautiful ruins, abandoned as they are:
Delirium of light, now serene at night,
Delirium almost beautiful when it is short and light.'

'I do not envy you, God; leave me alone
With my human endeavours which do not last:
The desire to fill what is ephemeral
With eternity is worth your omnipotence.'

[114]N.B.: The Spanish does not have a pronoun and could mean 'he', 'she' or 'it'.

Chapter Three

P. 142: 'The passionate rapidity of his approach even frightened Hanno, at first. The neglected little count sued for the favour of the quiet, elegantly dressed Hanno with a fiery, aggressive masculinity impossible to resist.'[115]

P. 143: 'Such was Hans Hansen; and ever since Tonio Kröger had known him, from the very minute he set eyes on him, he had burned inwardly with a heavy, envious longing.'[116]

PP. 143-4: 'As a horizon
For my mute glory, I want
Your arms encircling my life
And stripping its petals.

I live one single desire,
One clear unanimous want:
A longing for love and oblivion.
I do not know if someone falls.'[117]

P. 145: '[The girls] stood lined up on either side of the stairway, squeezing against the walls to leave room for K. to pass, and smoothing their skirts down with their hands. All their faces betrayed the same mixture of childishness and sophistication [lit.: 'depravity' or 'degeneracy'!]'[118]

'This friendship had been recognised in the school for a long time. ... The pupils could not understand it, but had settled down to regarding it with a sort of embarrassed dislike, and to thinking of the two friends as outlaws and eccentrics'[119]

P. 146: '"Yes, I'll play — I suppose — though I ought not. ... I cannot help it, though it only makes everything worse."

"Worse?"

Hanno was silent.

"I know what you mean," said Kai after a bit, and neither of the lads spoke again.

They were both at the same difficult age. Kai's face burned, and he cast down his eyes. Hanno looked pale.'[120]

'And yet! He stood there aloof and alone, staring hopelessly at a drawn blind and making, in his distraction, as though he could look out. But yet he was happy.'[121]

P. 147: 'I exist, well I know it:
The world to my senses

---

[115]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 421.

[116]Mann, *Death in Venice, Tristan, Tonio Kröger*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955), p. 133.

[117]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 7.

[118]Kafka, *The Trial*, trans. Edwin and Willa Muir (London: Minerva, 1992), p. 158.

[119]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 575.

[120]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 593.

[121]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 144.

Clearly reveals
Its amorous presence.

But I don't want these walls,
Air unfaithful to itself,
Or these branches'[122]

P. 148: 'And [the end] came; it could no longer be kept back — those spasms of yearning could not be prolonged. ... the redemption, the complete fulfilment — a chorus of jubilation burst forth, and everything resolved itself in a harmony —'[123]

P. 149: 'The fountain, the old walnut tree, his fiddle, and away in the distance, the North Sea, ... these were the things he loved, ... And they were all things whose names were effective in verse and occurred pretty frequently in the lines Tonio Kröger sometimes wrote.'[124]

P. 150: 'Hidden within walls
This garden offers me
The secret delights
Of its branches and water.

...

Languid earth. Fate shines
In vain. By the side
Of still waters, I dream
And think I live.

But time delimits
The sway of this moment;'[125]

P. 150, Note 29: 'The flame twists its loathing,
Alone its living presence,
And the lamp now sleeps
Over my veiled eyes.

How distant all of that. Dead
the roses which opened yesterday.'

P. 151: 'And the flight inward. The cold — reptilian
And sluggish — clenches tight its frozen rage;
Solitude, behind closed doors, begins
To throw its light across the empty page.

The watchful words that veil the enigmatic
Pleasure; and virgin lips are unaware.
The indolent dream, enraptured now,

---

[122]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 7.

[123]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 597.

[124]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 132.

[125]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 11.

Becomes a prisoner of its own thick mists,
Refusing to die. And nothing more
Than fleeting loveliness beneath the brow.'[126]

P. 154: 'then he relived the moment when her head had touched his, when he had breathed in the fragrance of her body — and for the second time he halted, ... and murmured helplessly, desperately, uncontrollably:
"My God, my God!"'[127]

P. 154, Note 34: 'He began his day with a cold shower over chest and back;'[128]

P. 155: 'Operations at the sand-pile being ended for the time, they two walked away along the beach, with their arms round each other's waists, and once the lad Jaschiu gave Adgio a kiss.'[129]

P. 155, Note 37: '"Good, oh, very good indeed!" thought Aschenbach, assuming the patronizing air of the connoisseur to hide, as artists will, their ravishment over a masterpiece.'[130]

P. 155: 'Aschenbach ... looked out. He felt rejoiced to be back, yet displeased with his vacillating moods, his ignorance of his own real desires. Thus for nearly an hour he sat, dreaming, resting, barely thinking. ... "Well, Tadzio, so here you are again too!" ... He ... realized that it was for Tadzio's sake the leavetaking had been so hard.'[131]

P. 156: 'a stamp of the classic, of conscious and deliberate mastery'[132]

'They were his destruction, well he knew it. But why struggle, then, and why torture himself? ... He would go his appointed way, closing his eyes before the yawning void, bowing to his fate, bowing to the overwhelming, anguishingly sweet, irresistible power.'[133]

P. 157: '... hate which ... degenerated now ... into an insane rage which must at all costs find expression even against himself ...
On his belly he dragged his body a little farther, lifted its upper part, and let it fall into the water.'[134]

PP. 157-8: 'Some sort of relationship and acquaintanceship was perforce set up between Aschenbach and the youthful Tadzio; ... what should move the lovely youth, ... to ... saunter along the sand, passing Aschenbach's tent in front, sometimes so unnecessarily close ...? .... Daily Aschenbach would wait for Tadzio. Then sometimes ... he looked up, and their glances met; ... The elder's dignified and cultured mien let nothing appear of his

---

[126]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 23.
[127]Mann, *Little Herr Friedemann and other Stories* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 24.
[128]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 14.
[129]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 38.
[130]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 35.
[131]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 46.
[132]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 18.
[133]Mann, *Little Herr Friedemann*, p. 30.
[134]Mann, *Little Herr Friedemann*, p. 35.

inward state; but in Tadzio's eyes a question lay — he faltered in his step, gazed on the ground, then up again with that ineffably sweet look he had; and when he was past, something in his bearing seemed to say that only good breeding hindered him from turning round.'[135]

P. 159, Note 49: '... without giving him time to compose his features ...'[136]

P. 159: '... and just at this second it happened that Tadzio smiled. Smiled at Aschenbach, unabashed and friendly, a speaking, winning, captivating smile, ... With such a smile it might be that Narcissus bent over the mirroring pool, ... the lips just slightly pursed, perhaps half-realizing his own folly in trying to kiss the cold lips of his shadow — with a mingling of coquetry and curiosity and a faint unease, enthralling and enthralled.'[137]

P. 159, Note 53: 'But his was the name oftenest on their lips, he was plainly sought after, wooed, admired.'[138]

P. 160, Note 55: 'Forgotten feelings ... quenched long since by the stern service that had been his life and now returned so strangely metamorphosed.'[139]

P. 160, Note 56: 'a stamp of the classic, of conscious and deliberate mastery'[140]

PP. 160-1: '"How dare you smile like that! ..." He flung himself on a bench, ... He leaned back, with hanging arms, quivering from head to foot, and quite unmanned he whispered the hackneyed phrase of love and longing ... "I love you!"'[141]

P. 161, Note 59: '... that the lover was nearer the divine than the beloved; for the god was in the one but not in the other —'[142]

P. 161: 'And he would feel transported to Elysium, to the ends of the earth, ... where Oceanus sends a mild and cooling breath, and days flow on in blissful idleness, without effort or struggle, entirely dedicate to the sun and the feasts of the sun.'[143]

P. 162: 'His art, his moral sense, what were they in the balance beside the boons that chaos might confer?'[144]

P. 162, Note 64: '... those Dionsyian impulses awake with the powerful approach of spring, which, full of relish, pervades all of nature. When these impulses are intensified, subjectivity dwindles to the point of complete forgetting of self.'

P. 162, Note 65: 'He kept silence, he stopped on.'[145]

---

[135]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 57.
[136]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 58.
[137]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 58.
[138]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 38.
[139]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 56.
[140]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 18.
[141]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, pp. 58-9.
[142]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 52.
[143]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 48.
[144]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 74.
[145]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 74.

PP. 162-3: 'It seemed to him the pale and lovely Summoner out there smiled at him and beckoned; as though with the hand he lifted from his hip, he pointed outward as he hovered on before into an immensity of richest expectation.'[146]

P. 163: 'The picture of Aschenbach's social-ethical failure in life must however be widened by his aesthetic self-fulfilment in death.'

'Aschenbach makes his life complete in this most beautiful artistic symbol, which he so characteristically made for himself by his artistic nature. ...
This expiatory self-sacrifice is the perfect example of a "love-death".'

P. 164, Note 73: '... is not nothingness a form of perfection?'[147]

P. 165: 'Tired, yet mentally alert, he beguiled the long, tedious meal with abstract, even with transcendent matters: pondered the mysterious harmony that must come to subsist between the individual human being and the universal law, in order that human beauty may result; passed on to general problems of form and art, and came at length to the conclusion that what seemed to him fresh and happy thoughts were like the flattering inventions of a dream, which the waking sense proves worthless and insubstantial.'[148]

P. 166: '... visited ... by varied and lively dreams.'[149]

'For beauty, my Phaedrus, beauty alone, is lovely and visible at once. For, mark you, it is the sole aspect of the spiritual which we can perceive through our senses, or bear so to perceive. ... So beauty, then, is the beauty-lover's way to the spirit — but only the way, only the means, my little Phaedrus.'[150]

P. 167, Note 81: '"You see, Aschenbach has always lived like this" — here the speaker closed the fingers of his left hand to a fist — "never like this" — and he let his open hand hang relaxed from the back of his chair.'[151]

PP. 167-8: 'The sight of this living figure, virginally pure and austere, with dripping locks, beautiful as a tender young god, emerging from the depths of sea and sky, outrunning the element — it conjured up mythologies, it was like a primeval legend, handed down from the beginning of time, of the birth of form, of the origin of the gods. With closed lids Aschenbach listened to this poesy hymning itself silently within him,'[152]

P. 169: 'His eyes took in the proud bearing of that figure there at the blue water's edge; with an outburst of rapture he told himself that what he saw was beauty's very essence; form as divine thought, the single and pure perfection which resides in the mind, of which an image and likeness, rare and holy, was here raised up for adoration. This was very frenzy —'[153]

---

[146]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 83.
[147]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 36.
[148]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 33.
[149]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 33.
[150]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 52.
[151]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 13.
[152]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 39.
[153]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 50.

P. 170, Note 87: '... in his infatuation he cared for nothing but to keep Tadzio here, and owned to himself, not without horror, that he could not exist were the lad to pass from his sight.'[154]

P. 170, Note 88: 'He saw. He beheld a landscape, a tropical marshland, beneath a reeking sky, steaming monstrous, rank — a kind of primeval wilderness-world of islands, morasses, and alluvial channels. ... Among the knotted joints of a bamboo thicket the eyes of a crouching tiger gleamed —'[155]

P. 170: '"... beauty alone is both divine and visible; and so it is the sense's way, the artist's way, little Phaedrus, to the spirit. ... Or do you rather think ... that it is a path of perilous sweetness, a way of transgression, and must surely lead him who walks in it astray? For you know that we poets cannot walk the way of beauty without Eros as our companion and guide."'[156]

P. 171, Note 92: '... therefore this dissonance would ... require a magnificent illusion which would cast a veil of beauty over its very being. This is Apollo's true aesthetic intention, etc.'

P. 172: 'K. ... rushed out, seized [Fräulein Bürstner], and kissed her first on the lips, then all over the face, like some thirsty animal lapping greedily at a spring of long-sought fresh water. Finally he kissed her on the neck, right on the throat, and kept his lips there for a long time.'[157]

P. 173, Note 96: '[K.] was completely taken up in staring at Fräulein Bürstner, who was leaning her head on one hand ... while with the other she slowly caressed her hip.'[158]

P. 173, Note 98: 'Besides, he could hardly follow the conversation and spent one minute thinking of the nurse,'[159]

P. 173: 'She hastily scrambled up until she was kneeling open-mouthed on his knees. K. looked up at her almost in dumfounderment; now that she was so close to him she gave out a bitter exciting odour as of pepper; she clasped his head to her, bent over him, and bit and kissed him on the neck,'[160]

P. 174: 'The [absolute mother] takes each and every man who is useful to her for bearing children, ... The [absolute coquette] gives herself to each and every man who helps her to gain erotic pleasure:'

P. 175: 'But the peasants would not let [Olga] go; they made up a dance in which she was the central figure, they circled round her ... the yells [grew] more hungry, more raucous, until they were insensibly blended into one continuous howl. Olga ... was now merely

---

[154]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 61.

[155]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, pp. 9-10.

[156]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 80.

[157]Kafka, *The Trial*, pp. 37-8.

[158]Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 34.

[159]Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 118.

[160]Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 123.

reeling with flying hair from one man to the other.'[161]

'The line of escape which leads to women is wide open. But what waits at its end is not redemption, not even satisfaction, but objectification, diversion, dissolution of individuality.'

P. 176: '... they embraced each other, her little body burned in K.'s hands, in a state of unconsciousness which K. tried again and again but in vain to master as they rolled a little way, landing with a thud on Klamm's door, where they lay among the small puddles of beer and other refuse'[162]

'There, hours went past, ... in which K. was haunted by the feeling that he was losing himself or wandering into a strange country, farther than ever man had wandered before, a country so strange that not even the air had anything in common with his native air, where one might die of strangeness, and yet whose enchantment was such that one could only go on and lose oneself further.'[163]

P. 177, Note 115: 'K. caught her wrist and squeezed it so hard that she had to loose her hold with a whimper.'[164]

P. 178: '"I won't be able to stand this life here. If you want to keep me with you, we'll have to go away somewhere or other, to the south of France, or to Spain." "I can't go away," replied K. "I came here to stay." ... "I miss Klamm?" said Frieda. ... "It's not Klamm that I miss, it's you. I want to go away for your sake, because I can't get enough of you,"'[165]

P. 179: '"... even though I can't think of any greater happiness than to be with you ... even though I feel that here in this world there's no undisturbed place for our love, ... and I dream of a grave, deep and narrow, where we could clasp each other in our arms as with iron bars, and I would hide my face in you and you would hide your face in me, and nobody would ever see us any more."'[166]

P. 179, Note 120: '"You're still Klamm's sweetheart, and not my wife yet by a long chalk.'[167]

P. 180: 'There they lay, but not in the forgetfulness of the previous night. She was seeking and he was seeking ... and their embraces and their tossing limbs did not avail to make them forget, but only reminded them of what they sought [lit.: of the duty to seek]; like dogs desperately tearing up the ground they tore at each other's bodies, and often, helplessly baffled, in a final effort to attain happiness they nuzzled and tongued each other's face.'[168]

P. 181: '"You've snatched Frieda from the happiest state she had ever known, ... She

---

[161]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 43.
[162]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 45.
[163]Kafka, *The Castle*, pp. 45-6.
[164]Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 202.
[165]Kafka, *The Castle*, pp. 132-3.
[166]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 134.
[167]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 136.
[168]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 49.

rescued you ... and sacrificed herself in doing so.'"[169]

P. 182: '"Your eyes — don't laugh at me, Fräulein Frieda — speak to me far more of conquests still to come than of conquests past. But the opposition one meets in the world is great, and becomes greater the higher one aims, and it's no disgrace to accept the help of a man who's fighting his way up too, even though he's a small and uninfluential man."'[170]

PP. 182-3: 'And yet, in spite of her childish mind, she too, apparently, had connexions with the Castle; ... and though if he took this tiny, plump slightly round-backed creature in his arms he could not extort from her what she possessed, yet that could bring him in contact with it and inspirit him for his difficult task. Then could her case now be much the same as Frieda's? Oh, no, it was different. One had only to think of Frieda's look to know that. K. would never have touched Pepi. All the same he had to lower his eyes for a little now, so greedily was he staring at her.'[171]

P. 183, Note 127: 'I am dirty, Milena, endlessly dirty'

'The way to love always leads through dirt and wretchedness. But scorning the path could easily lead to losing the goal.'

P. 184: '"I couldn't have held out so long here without these three keepsakes [from Klamm]."'[172]

'"Anybody that [Klamm] stops summoning he has forgotten completely, not only as far as the past is concerned, but literally for the future as well."'[173]

P. 184, Note 136: '"the Superintendent's arrangements for you are of no importance, and I'll talk to his wife when I have time."'[174]

P. 184: 'While the men manœuvre for the tiniest advantages ... "from time to time" — one does not understand on what grounds — the women come into contact with the more important decisions which determine people's fate.'

PP. 186-7: 'White, fragile shadows, asleep on the beach,
Asleep in their love, in their universal love,
Not knowing the burning colour of life
On a bed of sand and of abolished chance.

Freely the kisses fall from their lips
Into the untameable sea like useless pearls;'

P. 187, Note 145: 'Someone cut the stone in flower'

P. 188: 'I sang, I soared,

---

[169]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 57.
[170]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 42.
[171]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 99.
[172]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 79.
[173]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 83.
[174]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 87.

Once I was light
Dragged through the flame.

Like a gust of wind
Which destroys shadows,
I fell into blackness,
Into the insatiable world.'[175]

P. 188, Note 148: 'Some have bodies like flowers,
Others, like knives,
And others, like ribbons of water;
But sooner or later they will all
Be deep burns deepening in another's body,
By fire changing stone into a man.'[176]

P. 189: 'Where silence deadens life's appearance
The drowned man views his new domain:
Transparent, motionless plains display
Trees without colour and quiet birds.'[177]

'At last, high seas, no course, full sail;
Toward the distance, and beyond, the nameless flower.
Like an injured bird, to cross, go through
That clouded, difficult crystal, those strange lights.

In waters growing dark, the drowned man goes
Pale and floating lightly, blindly lost
In nocturnal depths, a star come down and quenched,
Toward the distance, yes, toward nameless air.'[178]

P. 190: 'In the midst of the crowd I saw him pass, with his eyes as fair as his hair. He was walking, and both the air and bodies parted as he did so; one woman knelt down as he passed. I felt how the blood was deserting my veins drop by drop.

Empty, I walked directionless through the city. Strange people passed by my side without seeing me. A body melted with a gentle sigh on bumping into me. I walked more and more.

I could not feel my feet. I wanted to take hold of them with my hand, but I could not find my hands; I wanted to shout but I could not find my voice. The mist was encircling me.

My life weighed heavily upon me like remorse; I wanted to throw it away from me. But it was impossible, because I was dead and I was walking amongst the dead.'

P. 192: 'Cobwebs are hanging from the mind
In a landscape turned to ash.
The hurricane of love has passed;
No bird remains.'[179]

---

[175]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 39.

[176]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 51.

[177]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 29.

[178]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 31.

[179]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 23.

'Because someone, cruel as a sunny day in spring,
Merely by his presence, has cut a body into two.'[180]

PP. 192-3: 'I was lying down and I had in my arms a body like silk. I kissed it on the lips, because the river was passing underneath. Then he made fun of my love.'

PP. 193-4: 'How to fill you, solitude,
Except with you yourself.

As a boy, amongst the poor shelters of earth,
Motionless in a dark corner,
I looked in you, glowing garland,
For my future dawns and furtive nights,
And in you I glimpsed them,'

P. 194: 'You, solitary truth,
Transparent passion, my eternal solitude,
You are an immense embrace;
The sun, the sea,
Darkness, the steppe,
Man and his desire,
The angered crowd,
What are they, but you yourself?'

P. 194, Note 166: 'I live one single desire,'[181]

PP. 194-5: 'I want to live when love dies;
Die, die soon, my love.
Open like a tail the purple victory of desire,
Although the lover believes himself to be buried in a sudden autumn,'

P. 195: 'How much a night like this is worth, indecisive between the end of spring and
the beginning of summer,
This instant in which I hear the gentle cracklings of the night wood,
In keeping with myself and with the others' indifference,
I alone with my life,
With my part in the world.

Young satyrs,
Who live in the forest, smiling lips in front of the anaemic Christian god,
Whom the merchant adores for the sake of good business,
Feet of young satyrs,
Dance more quickly when the lover weeps,
While he is intoning his tender dirge:
"Ah, when love dies".
Because dark and cruel liberty was born then;
Your careless joy knew how to strengthen it,
And desire will spin madly in pursuit of the beautiful bodies

---

[180]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 23.

[181]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 7.

Who bring life to the world for a single instant.'

P. 197, Note 175: 'Yours alone, in your eyes, was not enough for you'

P. 197: 'I love you.

I have said it to you with the wind,
Playing like a little animal on the sand
Or angry like a tempestuous organ;'

PP. 197-8: 'I have said it to you with fear,
I have said it to you with joy,
With disgust, with terrible words.

But this is not enough:
Beyond life,
I want to say it to you with death;
Beyond love,
I want to say it to you with oblivion.'

PP. 198-9: 'My homeland?
My homeland is you.

My people?
My people are you.

Exile and death
Are for me where
You are not.

And my life?
Tell me, my life.
What is it, if it isn't you?'

P. 199, Note 178: 'What is poetry? you say, as you
fix your blue eyes on mine.
What is poetry? And you ask me?
Poetry ... is you!'

P. 199: 'But you also set
Just like the sun, and round
About me grow the shadows
Of solitude, old age, death.'

P. 201, Note 181: 'Where there is a solitary stone,
inscriptionless,
where oblivion dwells,
there will be my tomb.'

P. 201: 'Like one sail at sea,
Concentrating all that blue longing
That rises toward future stars
As a staircase of waves

Where divine feet descend to the abyss,
So you are the figure —
You angel, demon, dream of a dreamed love —
Concentrating in me the longing
That once lifted sorrowful waves toward the clouds.'[182]

P. 203: 'Beneath the immense twilight,
Beneath the unleashed rain, I was
Like an angel who is thrown
From that native Eden.'

'What used to be the impulse in the realm of light, the wings,
Which were one time raised innocence,
Weigh dully on the shoulders.'

'You would like a young force to raise again,
With filth, tears, hate, injustice,
The image of love towards the sky,
The image of love into pure light.'

P. 204: 'Still shuddering with that longing,
Without the light that would
Reveal me clearly dead or alive,
I, the most enamored, on love's shore
Stare at the waves and want to sink in them
Like those angels; I must descend
The ladder of foam
Despondently, to love-depths that no man has seen!'[183]

P. 205, Note 195: 'Like a gust of wind
Which destroys shadows,
I fell into blackness,
Into the insatiable world.'[184]

PP. 205-6: 'I expected a god in my time
To create my life in its image,
But love, like water,
Drags desire in its wake.

I have forgotten myself in its waves;
My body empty, I hit out against the lights;
Alive and not alive, dead and not dead;
Neither earth nor heaven, neither body nor spirit.

I am the echo of something;'

P. 206: 'The nameless torment
Is no longer either life or death

---

[182]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 57.

[183]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 57.

[184]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 39.

It is a fallen world
Where anger whistles.

It is a raving sea,
Clamour of all space,
Voice which from itself raises
The wings of a posthumous god.'

P. 207: 'It is the forest of plane trees, tall, smooth trunks,
Like white columns drawing lines across the horizon
Where the gilding midday sun presides,
At the foot of the clear water, at the edge of which
Shy violets feed sweetly.

She is motionless. The bluish clothing
Covers airily her virgin beauty;'

PP. 207-8, Note 202: 'The sky no longer sings,
Neither is its celestial eternity present
For the light and the roses,
But instead with the nocturnal horror of things.'

P. 208: 'If in days gone by I gave free rein
To useless passion, its long, feverish grief,
Now I seek your sanctuary, your love,'

P. 209: 'Love is the source of everything;
There is joy in the light because that fount is shining,
The spigot encloses the god because that fount is flowing,
The word is a pure voice because that fount is sounding,
And death is its enviable depth.
Ecstatic on its bank,
Oh torment divine,
Oh divine delight,
Simultaneously you drink from your thirst and from the fount,
Knowing for eternity your thirst and the water.'

PP. 209-10, Note 209: 'Prisoner in your exactness,
Motionlessly giving yourself,
You submit yourself to an ardent power,
Which invades me.

Love! Neither you nor I,
We, and through love
All the wonders
In which being comes to exist.

The highest peak of the earth
Is completely filled.
Here it is: truth
Reveals itself and creates us.

Oh reality, finally

Real, in appearance!
What universe is born to me
Without veiling its god?

Soul, faithful to volume,
Be a weight in my arms.
Soul, with abandon,
Fold your grief.'

P. 210: 'If the body of one day
Is the ash of always,
Without ash there is no flame,
Neither without death is the body
Witness of love, faith of eternal love,
Reason of the world which directs the stars.'

P. 211: 'If dying were like this,
A tranquil recalling of life,
A serene contemplation of things,
How happy death would be,
Rescuing the past
In order to dream it alone when free,
In order to think about it like eternal present,
As if a thought were worth more than the world.'

P. 211, Note 213: '... If only a thought is worth as much as the world?'

P. 212: 'I want to live when love dies'

'Distant blooms of tranquil light awaken,'[185]

'Toward ... the nameless flower.'[186]

P. 213: 'On the formless grief of life,
Calming the spirit in its way.'

---

[185]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 29.

[186]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 31.

Chapter Four

P. 218: 'The singing, shimmering joy was quenched and silent. He had found himself back home in his room, with a burning head and the consciousness that only a few hours of sleep, there in his bed, separated him from dull everyday existence.'[187]

'Gustave Aschenbach was the poet-spokesman of all those who labour at the edge of exhaustion; ... of all our modern moralizers of accomplishment, ... who yet contrive by skilful husbanding and prodigious spasms of will to produce, at least for a while, the effect of greatness.'[188]

P. 219, Note 6: '... the substance of the *Dionysian*, which is brought to us most nearly by means of analogy with *intoxication*.'

P. 219: '[Happiness] came over him with all its enchantment and consecration, all its secret revelation and tremors, its sudden inner emotion, its extravagant, unquenchable intoxication.'[189]

P. 220: 'Verily it is well for the world that it sees only the beauty of the completed work and not its origins nor the conditions whence it sprang; since knowledge of the artist's inspiration might often but confuse and alarm and so prevent the full effect of its excellence.'[190]

P. 221, Note 13: '... discourse on the theme of Mind and Art ...'[191]

P. 221: 'Never had the pride of the word been so sweet to him, never had he known so well that Eros is in the word, as in those perilous and precious hours when ..., his idol full in his view and the music of his voice in his ears, he fashioned his little essay after the model Tadzio's beauty set: that page and a half of choicest prose,'[192]

P. 222: 'The fanatical worship of this worthless trifle, this scrap of melody ... had about it something stupid and gross, and at the same time something ascetic and religious — something that contained the essence of faith and renunciation. ... there was a sort of cynical despair; there was a longing for joy, a yielding to desire, in the way the last drop of sweetness was, as it were, extracted from the melody,'[193]

PP. 222-3: '[The *Maia* world and the epic amplitude] were heaped up to greatness in layer after layer, in long days of work, out of hundreds and hundreds of single inspirations; they owed their excellence ... to one thing ...: that their creator could hold out ... with an endurance and a tenacity of purpose ... devoting to actual composition none but his best and freshest hours.'[194]

---

[187]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 563.
[188]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 16.
[189]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 563.
[190]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 53.
[191]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 13.
[192]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 53.
[193]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 597.
[194]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 14.

P. 223, Note 21: 'Aschenbach's whole soul ... was bent on fame —'[195]

P. 224: 'Appeasement, compromise — are they not all my striving? To assent, to allow, to give both sides play, balance, harmony. The combination of all forces makes up the world; each is weighty,'[196]

'I see into a whirl of shadows of human figures who beckon to me to weave spells to redeem them: tragic and laughable figures and some that are both together — and to these I am drawn.'[197]

P. 225: 'He was overwrought by a morning of hard, nerve-taxing work, work which had not ceased to exact his uttermost in the way of sustained concentration, conscientiousness, and tact;'[198]

P. 226: '... beauty can pierce one like a pain ...'[199]

'His face recalled the noblest moment of Greek sculpture ... Yet with all this chaste perfection of form it was of such unique personal charm that the observer thought he had never seen, either in nature or art, anything so utterly happy and consummate.'[200]

PP. 228-9: 'It's much more irritating work than doing the actual business in the office, and on top of that there's the trouble of constant traveling, of worrying about train connections, the bed and irregular meals, casual acquaintances that are always new and never become intimate friends.'[201]

P. 229, Note 39: 'Samsa is not a cryptogram'

'[It] is not completely Kafka'

'... to a certain extent an indiscretion ...'

P. 229: 'God does not want me to write, but I must.'

PP. 229-30: 'Writing is a sweet, wonderful reward, but for what? Last night it was ... clear that it is the reward for devil's work. This descent to the dark powers, this loosing of nature's bound spirits, questionable embraces and whatever goes on down below ... And the devilish thing about it seems quite clear. It is vanity and hedonism,'

P. 230: 'out for publicity'[202]

'cheat'[203]

---

[195]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 13.

[196]Mann, *Lotte in Weimar*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 245.

[197]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 191.

[198]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 7.

[199]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 563.

[200]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, pp. 30-1.

[201]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, pp. 89-90.

[202]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 270.

[203]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 270.

'... perhaps dangerous, perhaps redeeming comfort of writing ...'

P. 231: 'I will still be able to get temporary satisfaction from works like *A Country Doctor*, on condition that I'll manage to write something like it again (very unlikely). But I'm only happy if I can lift the world into the pure, the true, the immutable.'

P. 232: 'All of this literature is an assault against the boundary, and it could easily have developed into a new secret teaching, a Kabbalah, if Zionism hadn't got in the road.'

P. 233: '... just a piping ...'[204]

'"Wild nature, a heathscape," said the painter, handing K. the picture. It showed two stunted trees standing far apart from each other in darkish grass. In the background was a many-hued sunset. ... "Here's the companion picture," he said ... but there was not the slightest difference that one could see between it and the other,'[205]

P. 234: 'I haven't sold out to writing. I've been dead my whole life long and now I really will die. My life was sweeter than other people's, my death will be all the more frightening. The writer in me will of course die immediately, for such a figure has no basis, no permanence, isn't even made of dust; he's only possible in the craziest of earthly life, he's only a construction of hedonism.'

P. 235: 'And yet Gregor's sister was playing so beautifully. ... Was he an animal, that music had such an effect upon him? He felt as if the way were opening before him to the unknown nourishment he craved.'[206]

P. 237: 'In some dark city, where smoke enshrouds
In the dream of a life warped by habit
And work gives neither freedom nor hope,
Still there is the concert hall, still man can
Allow his humiliated mind to be ennobled'

P. 238, Note 66: 'It was in London that I had the best chances to listen to music; I shall not forget a series of weekly concerts dedicated to all of Mozart's chamber music.'

P. 238: 'Here, to be born with a gift
Is misfortune;
Here men in their misery
Know only
Insults, scorn, and deep suspicion
Of anyone who illuminates opaque words
With the original, occult fire.'[207]

'the primeval Chaos'

P. 239, Note 69: 'Ah, secret voice of dark love,
wound, bleating without wool!

---

[204]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 361.

[205]Kafka, *The Trial*, pp. 180-1.

[206]Kafka, *The Complete Short Stories*, pp. 130-1.

[207]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 75.

withered camelia, bitter needle!
current without sea, city with no wall!

Tremendous night with sharp-edged profile,
celestial mountain, narrow defile!
dog in the heart, receding voice!
unending silence, full-blown iris!'[208]

'[the] other love' which 'the base world insults'

P. 240: 'Death is a victory for the poet;
A demon wind drives him through life,
And if some blind force
Without love's understanding
Changes you from singer to hero
By its crime,
Then, my brother, consider
How among sadness and disdain
An even more magnanimous power permits your friends
To rot freely in some corner.'[209]

P. 241: 'I discovered you, equal to the tender poplar
Of graceful green silver, trembling
In the morning wind next to the fountain,
Playing on the earth's meadows.'

PP. 241-2: 'Is beauty,
Fleshly form of a heavenly idea,
Made to die? Wine of gold
Which makes drunk gods and poets,
Opening vast dreams like time,
I want to make it [beauty] immortal.'

P. 242, Note 83: 'To write in Spain is not to weep, it is to die,'

PP. 242-3: 'The word is short like birdsong,
But a clear shred can catch fire in it
From intoxication, passion, fleeting beauty,
And rise, guardian angel which bears witness to man,
Up towards the heavenly, impassive realm.'

P. 243: 'the average man'

'In few men, such as Goethe, do we see
Happy coinciding and acting,
Helped, and he helping them, by so many gifts
Which development, as varied as it is wise and harmonious,
Illuminates and balances. This man is called,
Without knowing why: genius.'

---

[208]Lorca, *Selected Poems*, p. 215.

[209]Cernuda, *Selected Poems*, p. 81.

P. 245: 'primeval Chaos'

'"Thin or flabby, no hair, glasses,
Toothless. That is what
My latter-day servant looks like; and like that
Is his character."'

P. 246: 'His work is all reason, but it serves all
Imagination, in it grace and majesty unite,
Irony and passion, depth and lightness.
Its un-frozen architecture produces liquid forms
Of inexplicable splendour.'

P. 246, Note 98: 'architecture' is 'frozen music'

PP. 246-7: 'If, formless, the world departed God's hands,
Its order twisted, its injustice terrible;
If life is wretched and man is weak,
This music gives form, order, justice, nobility and beauty
To the world. Its saviour then,
Who is it? Its redeemer, who is it then?
No sin in it, no martyr, no blood.'

P. 247, Note 103: '... and in the music he lives for ever.'[210]

P. 252: 'Language can, for everything outwith the sensual world, only be used allusively, but never even nearly comparatively, since it, corresponding to the sensual world, only knows of possession and its relationships.'

P. 253: 'Virtually no word that I write fits alongside another, I hear how consonants rub together like metal, and the vowels sing ... I have a circle of doubts standing around every word,'

P. 254, Note 123: '... the Castle satisfied K.'s expectations. It was neither an old stronghold nor a new mansion, but a rambling pile'[211]

P. 254: 'But on approaching it he was disappointed in the Castle; it was after all only a wretched-looking town, a huddle of village houses, whose sole merit, if any, lay in being built of stone,'[212]

P. 257, Note 135: '"... Frieda's calm ... Frieda's matter-of-factness ..."'[213]

P. 258: 'These two letters that have gone through Barnabas's hands are the first signs of grace, questionable as they are, that our family has received for three years. This change, if it is a change and not deception — deceptions are more frequent than changes — is connected with your arrival here, our fate has become in a certain sense dependent on

---

[210]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 163.

[211]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 15.

[212]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 15.

[213]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 293.

you, perhaps these two letters are only a beginning,'[214]

P. 259: 'There was a knock.'[215]

PP. 262-3: 'The celestial mark of love in a desert field
where a few minutes ago two desires fought,
where a last bird still escapes across the sky,
hot feather which some hands have held on to.'

P. 263: 'Cold, congealed moon, you would give a crystalline quality to bodies!
You would give souls the appearance of kisses;
in a forest of palms, of folded doves,
of beaks which plot like motionless stones.

Moon, moon, sound, hard metal or trembling:
wing, terrifying plumage, you rub an ear,
you mumble the hard threatening sky,
while you lie about water which looks like blood!'

P. 264, Note 159: 'a current ... to which I could not, and did not want to, remain indifferent.'

'... dictated by an impulse similar to the one which inspired the surrealists.'

P. 264, Note 160: 'I'm tired of houses'

'I'm tired of things'

P. 264: 'How to express with words things which are inexpressible? Words are alive, and therefore they deceive; what they express today as true and pure, tomorrow is false and dead. You have to use them taking their limitations into account,'

P. 265, Note 162: 'And if [poetry] needs [words], those words are already certainly very different, although, like the other ones, like all words, they too are deceitful.'

P.265: 'It has rained so much since then,
Then, when teeth were not flesh, but small
Days like an ignorant river
Calling its parents because it is tired,'

'Some say yes, others say no;
But yes and no are two small wings,
Balance of a sky within another sky,
Like one love within another,
Like oblivion within oblivion.'

P. 267: 'Headless cowboy,
Cowboy like a child searching amongst waste
For newly-cut keys,

---

[214]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 215.

[215]Kafka, *The Castle*, p. 217.

Seductive vipers, sumptuous disasters,
Ships for land slowly of flesh,
Of flesh until death, the way a man dies.'

'Let's forget everything then, including the west;
Let's forget that one day the looks of this moment
Will shine in the night, like so many lovers,
Except the far west,
On love which is further away.'

P. 268: 'Through a night in full day
Vaguely I have known death.
No greyhound accompanies it;
It lives among dried-out ponds,
Grey ghosts of nebulous stone.'

'Look at oblivion, conquered, and fear of so many white shadows
Through the pale dunes of life,
Neither round nor blue, but lunatic,
With its white lagoons, with its forests
In which the hunter, if he wishes, hunts velvet.'

'Lifeless, he lives alone, profoundly.'

P. 270, Note 179: 'As far as lies are concerned, I only need to say "I love you"'

P. 270: 'One truth is the colour of ash,
Another truth is the colour of a planet;
But all truths, from the floor to the floor,
Are not worth truth without the colour of truths,
The truth which does not know how man is usually born in snow.'

P. 271: 'What a sad noise two bodies make when they are in love,
It is like the wind in autumn
On mutilated adolescents,
While hands rain,
Light hands, selfish hands, obscene hands,'

P. 275: 'What I experienced and shaped — but I experienced it first *while* I was shaping it — , that was *also* a development and modernisation of the "burgher",'

P. 276: 'For a manifesto, if it is strong, may in all cases have the power to enthral and fascinate, but only the work of art can *set free*.'

P. 276, Note 190: 'Beauty is the product of harmony between the spirit and the senses; it speaks to all human faculties at once and therefore can only be felt and acknowledged when all man's powers are used fully and freely.'

P. 278: 'She stood there, a victor in the good fight which all her life she had waged against the assaults of Reason: hump-backed, tiny, quivering with the strength of her convictions, a little prophetess, admonishing and inspired.'[216]

---

[216]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 604.

P. 280: 'Narrative which "allegorises" attempts to construct an "image" which changes the succession of words, to which it owes its origin, into a simultaneous construct which ultimately engulfs the entire novel.'

P. 281: 'He was obviously not Bavarian; and the broad, straight-brimmed straw hat he had on even made him look distinctly exotic. True he had the indigenous rucksack buckled on his back ... In his right hand, slantwise to the ground, he held an iron-shod stick,'[217]

P. 282: 'judge my art-works as you will and ought, but *they were always good scores*'

P. 283: '... obviously not Bavarian [lit.: not a Bavarian type];'[218]

'... scarcely a Venetian type [lit.: not a Venetian type] ...'[219]

'... his tongue kept seeking the corner of his mouth in a suggestive [lit.: equivocal] motion ugly to behold.'[220]

'... the loose play of the tongue in the corner of his mouth ... an equivocal meaning'[221]

PP. 283-4: 'It was the *motif*, the *first motif*! And now began a festival, a triumph, an unbounded orgy of this very figure, which now displayed a wealth of dynamic colour which passed through every octave, wept and shivered in tremolo, sang, rejoiced, and sobbed in exultation, triumphantly adorned with all the bursting, tinkling, foaming, purling resources of orchestral pomp.'[222]

P. 284: 'He would write, and moreover he would write in Tadzio's presence. This lad should be in a sense his model ... Never had the pride of the word been so sweet to him, never had he known so well that Eros is in the word, as in those perilous and precious hours when he ... fashioned his little essay after the model Tadzio's beauty set: that page and a half of choicest prose, so chaste, so lofty, so poignant with feeling, which would shortly be the wonder and admiration of the multitude.'[223]

P. 285, Note 223: '... burning question of art and taste.'[224]

P. 287: '"I shall limit myself to telling you that if I think a poet is great it is:
1. Because of the melodic fusion in his verse of word, sense and rhythm;
2. Because of the precision and beauty of his language;
3. Because of the breadth of his vision;
4. Because of the wealth and flexibility of his thought.
But moreover, and on top of what I've just said, the poet needs the presence of what I would call the part of God: the imponderable element, the magic touch which animates

---

[217]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 8.

[218]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 8.

[219]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 67.

[220]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 24.

[221]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 67. The published translation's lack of consistency in translating these 'Leitmotive' is very regrettable.

[222]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 597.

[223]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, pp. 52-3.

[224]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 52.

and vivifies the material through which its other qualities work.'"

P. 289: 'Many things illustrious voices say to us
From the past, coming from our word,
And from those of a foreign language, whose accent
Reveals to us a different experience. But things,
Fire, sea, trees, stars,
Always appear new.'

P. 290: 'For the poet to find it [the rose of the world] is enough,
And useless his work's renown or oblivion,
When in it for one moment there is united,
As one, lover, love and beloved,
The three complementary then and previously disparate:
Desire, rose and look.'

P. 291: 'It is hard to find oneself alone
Amongst [living] bodies.
But this form has
Its love: the empty cross.'

'Communion with men.'

'The night will be short.'

P. 292: 'She is motionless. The bluish clothing
Covers airily her virgin beauty;
The diamond star there on her brow
Wild like the snow, and in her eyes
The light which knows no shadow.'

P. 293: 'The hand deliberately and softly
Requests a cage for an invisible bird,
For sister water and for air,
From its voice.

Like the water, prisoner
Of the fountain, it trembles, rises
In an iridescent flight,
Instructing souls.

Like air through leaves,
It talks so slowly, so purely,
Of memories and of forgetting
Become legendary in time.

What fruits of paradise
What cisterns of the sky
Nourish your voice? Tell me, sing,
Bird of the harp, oh lyre.'

P. 295: 'A total, irresistible harmony arises;
Beehive of musical sweetness, all is resounding;

The monk is in his cell, where he controls his desire;
The soldier in the field, where he forges strength;
The poet in his mirror, where he reflects the myth.'

'Change is my disquiet,
That one day's victories should change to defeat.
My triumphant reign, must it see its ruin?'

P. 295, Note 257: 'My work is not outside, but within,
In my soul;
...
And what I am building
Is not stone, but soul, the inextinguishable fire.'

'I cannot be wrong, I must not be wrong;'

P. 298: 'I do not know men'

'I do not understand rivers'

'I do not understand men'

'But I do not worry about being unknown'

'I will not be able to tell you how much I am struggling
So that my word may not die
Silently with me, and that it should come like an echo
To you, like a storm which has past
And recalls a vague sound through the still air.'

P. 299: 'When in days to come, man, free
From the primitive world to which we have returned
Of darkness and horror, destiny will bring
Your hand towards the volume where lie
My verses forgotten, and you will open it,
I know that you will hear my voice reach you,
Not from the old lettering, but from the living
Depths in your innards, with a nameless longing
Which you will dominate. Listen to me and understand.
In its limbo my soul perhaps will remember something,
And then in you yourself my dreams and desires
Will at last be right, and I will have lived.'

P. 300: 'in our innards'

PP. 300-1, Note 267: 'If your tongue is the material
I used in my writings, and if, because of this,
You are to be the witnesses
Of my existence and its work,
I curse your tongue,
My tongue, the one I speak, the one I write.
So you can, with time, as you are doing now
In your hearts and minds, cast out

From your heart and memory my person and my work.'[225]

P. 301: 'Irony on both sides'

'Irony is ambiguous, multivocal, it is the position of "Not only but also", of hovering in the middle'

P. 302: '... a simple *motif* ... a mere trifle'[226]

P. 303: '... and lastly ... the writer of that impassioned discourse on the theme of Mind and Art whose ordered force and antithetic eloquence led serious critics to rank it with Schiller's *Simple and Sentimental Poetry.*'[227]

P. 305: 'There are countless hiding-places, only one salvation, but possibilities of salvation again as many as hiding-places.
There is a goal but no way of reaching it; what we call the way is hesitation.'

---

[225]Cernuda, *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, p. 169.

[226]Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 595.

[227]Mann, *Death in Venice, etc.*, p. 13.

Bibliography

Primary Literature

Cernuda, Luis. *Obra completa.* 3 Vols. Ed. Derek Harris and Luis Maristany. Madrid: Ediciones Siruela, 1993-4.

———. *Selected Poems of Luis Cernuda.* Ed. and trans. Reginald Gibbons. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.

———. *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda.* Ed. and trans. Anthony Edkins and Derek Harris. New York: New York University, 1971.

Kafka, Franz. *Briefe an Felice und andere Korrespondenz aus der Verlobungszeit.* Ed. Erich Heller and Jürgen Born. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1976.

———. *Briefe an Milena.* Ed. Jürgen Born and Michael Müller. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1986.

———. *Gesammelte Werke in Acht Bänden.* Ed. Max Brod. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1975-83.

———. *The Castle.* Trans. Edwin and Willa Muir. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1957.

———. *The Complete Short Stories.* Ed. Nahum N. Glatzer. London: Minerva, 1992.

———. *The Trial.* Trans. Edwin and Willa Muir. London: Minerva, 1992.

Mann, Thomas. *Buddenbrooks: Decline of a Family.* Trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter. London: Secker and Warburg, 1956.

———. *Death in Venice, Tristan, Tonio Kröger.* Trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955.

———. *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelbänden.* 20 Vols. Ed. Peter de Mendelssohn. Frankfurter Ausgabe. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1980-6.

———. *Little Herr Friedemann and other Stories.* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.

———. *Lotte in Weimar.* Trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968.

Secondary Literature

Abraham, Ulf. *Der verhörte Held: Verhöre, Urteile und die Rede von Recht und Schuld im Werk Franz Kafkas*. München: Wilhelm Fink, 1985.

Aguirre, J. M. 'La poesía primera de Luis Cernuda.' *Hispanic Review*, 34 (1966), 121-34.

Allen, Rupert C. 'Luis Cernuda: Poet of Gay Protest.' *Hispanófila*, 28 (1985), 61-78.

Almodóvar, Javier, and Miguel A. Márquez. 'Heráclito en *La realidad y el deseo*.' *Estudios clásicos*, 30, No. 93 (1988), 43-50.

Alt, Peter-André. '"Das Gute ist in gewissem Sinne trostlos." Motive der Melancholie bei Kafka.' *Modern Austrian Literature*, 21, No. 2 (1988), 55-76.

— — —. 'Doppelte Schrift, Unterbrechung und Grenze: Franz Kafkas Poetik des Unsagbaren im Kontext der Sprachskepsis um 1900.' *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft*, 29 (1985), 455-90.

Ancet, Jacques. 'El deseo, lo negro (Sobre Luis Cernuda).' *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, Nos. 514-5 (1993), 215-20.

Anders, Günther. *Franz Kafka*. Trans. A. Steer and A. K. Thorlby. London: Bowes and Bowes, 1960.

Anderson, David. *The Tragic Protest: A Christian Study of Some Modern Literature*. London: SCM Press, 1969.

Anderson, Mark. 'Kafka and the Place of the Proper Name.' *Journal of the Kafka Society of America*, 9 (1985), 3-17.

Angermeier, John S. 'The Punica Granatum Motif in Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig*.' *Germanic Notes and Reviews*, 26 (1995), 12-15.

Anton, Herbert. *Die Romankunst Thomas Manns: Begriffe und hermeneutische Strukturen*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1972.

Argullol, Rafael. 'Cernuda romántico.' *Quimera*, 15-I-1982, pp. 29-32.

Arie-Graifman, Hana. 'Milena, Odradek, Samsa. Zur tschechischen Etymologie einiger Eigennamen bei Kafka.' *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, 72 (1991), 95-100.

Arnold, Heinz Ludwig, ed. *Franz Kafka*. München: Edition Text und Kritik, 1994.

Astrachan, Gary D. 'Dionysos in Thomas Mann's Novella, "Death in Venice".' *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 35 (1990), 59-78.

Ballestero, Manuel. 'Cernuda, errante en la finitud.' In *Sondas de hermeneútica y de poética*. Madrid: Hiperión, 1981, pp. 107-28.

— — —. *Poesía y reflexión: La palabra en el tiempo*. Madrid: Taurus, 1980.

Barasch, Monique. 'Das Leitmotiv in den "Buddenbrooks" von Thomas Mann.' *The USF*

Language Quarterly, 18, Nos. 3-4 (1980), 9-14.

Barnette, Douglas. 'Luis Cernuda y su Generación: La creación de una leyenda.' *Revista de estudios hispánicos*, 18 (1984), 123-32.

Basilius, H. A. 'Thomas Mann's Use of Musical Structure and Techniques in *Tonio Kröger*.' *Germanic Review*, 19 (1944), 284-308.

Baumgart, Reinhart. *Das Ironische und die Ironie in den Werken Thomas Manns*. 2nd ed. München: Carl Hanser, 1966.

Bellver, Catherine C. 'Luis Cernuda's Paragons of Mythical Beauty.' *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 43 (1990), 32-41.

Bellver, C. G. 'Luis Cernuda and T. S. Eliot: A Kinship of Message and Motifs.' *Revista de estudios hispánicos*, 17 (1983), 107-24.

Ben-Ephraim, Gavriel. 'Making and Breaking Meaning: Deconstruction, Four-level Allegory and *The Metamorphosis*.' *Midwest Quarterly*, 35 (1994), 450-67.

Bennett, Benjamin, Anton Kies and William J. Lillyman, eds. *Probleme der Moderne. Studien zur deutschen Literatur von Nietzsche bis Brecht. Festschrift für Walter Sokel.* Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1983.

Benson, Peter. 'Entering *The Castle*.' *Journal of Narrative Technique*, 23 (1993), 80-91.

Berendsohn, Walter A. *Thomas Mann: Künstler und Kämpfer in bewegter Zeit*. Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 1965.

Bernheimer, Charles. *Flaubert and Kafka: Studies in Psychopoetic Structure*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

Beutner, Barbara. *Die Bildsprache Franz Kafkas*. München: Wilhelm Fink, 1973.

Billeter, Fritz. *Das Dichterische bei Kafka und Kierkegaard: Ein typologischer Vergleich*. Winterthur: P. G. Keller, 1965.

Binder, Hartmut. *Kafka in neuer Sicht: Mimik, Gestik und Personengefüge als Darstellungsformen des Autobiographischen*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1976.

— — —. 'Kafkas literarische Urteile: Ein Beitrag zu seiner Typologie und Ästhetik.' *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 86 (1967), 211-49.

Bloom, Harold, ed. *Franz Kafka*. New York: Chelsea House, 1986.

Bludau, Beatrix, Eckhard Heftrich and Helmut Koopmann, eds. *Thomas Mann 1875-1975: Vorträge in München-Zürich-Lübeck*. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1977.

Blum, Mark E. 'Will Tempered by Empathy Establishes Community: The Significance of Momus in Kafka's *Das Schloß*.' *Colloquia Germanica*, 26 (1993), 109-34.

Borchers, Klaus. *Mythos und Gnosis im Werk Thomas Manns: Eine religionswissenschaftliche Untersuchung*. Freiburg: Hochschulverlag, 1980.

Brann, Henry Walter. 'Thomas Mann und Schopenhauer.' *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch*, 43 (1962), 117-26.

Braun, Michael. 'Rooms with a View? — Kafka's "Fensterblicke".' *German Studies Review*, 15 (1992), 11-23.

Brennan, Joseph Gerard. '*Buddenbrooks* and After.' *American Scholar*, 62 (1993), 119-29.

Bridges, George Byron. 'Homoeroticism and the Father-Son Relation in the Principal Works of Herman Melville and Thomas Mann.' Diss. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 1983.

Bridgwater, Patrick. *Kafka and Nietzsche*. Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1974.

Brod, Max. *Über Franz Kafka*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1974.

Bruton, Kevin J[ohn]. '"El joven marino": A Landmark in Cernuda's Poetic Development.' *Quinquereme*, 4, No. 1 (1981), 85-92.

———. 'Luis Cernuda and the Poetics of Desire.' *Ibero-Romania*, 27 (1988), 61-78.

— — —. 'Symbolical Reference and Internal Rhythm: Luis Cernuda's Debt to Hölderlin.' *Revue de littérature comparée*, 58 (1984), 37-49.

— — —. 'The Cemetery Poems of Luis Cernuda.' *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 13 (1988), 189-208.

———. 'The Developing Expression in the Poetry of Luis Cernuda: The Rôle of Image and Symbol.' Thesis London 1980.

———. 'The Romantic and Post-Romantic Theme of Poetic Space as Exemplified in the Poetry of Luis Cernuda.' In *Space and Boundaries in Literature*, Vol. III of *Proceedings of the Twelfth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*. Ed. R. Bauer, D. Fokkema and M. de Graat. München: Iudicum, 1990, pp. 351-6.

Bryson, Cynthia B. 'The Imperative Daily Nap; or, Aschenbach's Dream in *Death in Venice*.' *Studies in Short Fiction*, 29 (1992), 181-93.

Burgard, Peter J. 'From "Enttäuschung" to "Tristan": The Devolution of a Language Crisis in Thomas Mann's Early Work.' *German Quarterly*, 59 (1986), 431-48.

Cacheiro, Maximino. 'La problemática del escrito en "La realidad y el deseo".' *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, No. 316 (1976), 54-60.

Caminero, Juventino. 'Luis Cernuda como poeta comprometido en la guerra civil española.' *Letras de Deusto*, 16, No. 35 (1986), 53-70.

Capote Benot, José María. *El surrealismo en la poesía de Luis Cernuda*. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1976.

Coleman, J. Alexander. *Other Voices: A Study of the Late Poetry of Luis Cernuda.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969.

Corngold, Stanley. *Franz Kafka: The Necessity of Form.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.

———. 'Kafka and the Dialect of Minor Literature.' *College Literature*, 21 (1994), 89-101.

———. 'Restoring the Image of Death: On Death and the Figure of Chiasm in Kafka.' *Journal of the Kafka Society of America*, 9 (1985), 49-68.

Couso Cadahya, J. Luis. 'Búsqueda de lo absoluto en la poesía de Luis Cernuda.' *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, No. 316 (1976), 21-44.

Daemmrich, Horst S. 'Mann's Portrait of the Artist: Archetypal Patterns.' In *Makers of the Twentieth Century Novel.* Ed. Harry R. Garvin. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977, pp. 166-78.

David, Claude. 'Kafka und das Groteske.' *Études Germaniques*, 43 (1988), 109-19.

Debicki, Andrew P. *Estudios sobre poesía española contemporánea. La generación de 1924-1925.* Madrid: Gredos, 1968.

Dedner, Burghard. 'Kultur und Wahrheit. Zur thematischen Dialektik von Thomas Manns Frühwerk.' *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft*, 27 (1983), 345-80.

De Laurentis, Shelley A. 'Luz y sombra en la poesía de Cernuda.' *Sin Nombre*, 6, No. 4 (1976), 8-18.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature.* Trans. Dana Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

Delgado, Agustín. *La poética de Luis Cernuda.* Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1975.

Dierks, Manfred. 'Der Wahn und die Träume in »Der Tod in Venedig«. Thomas Manns folgenreiche Freud-Lektüre im Jahr 1911.' *Psyche*, 44 (1990), 240-68.

Di Virgilio, P. S. 'In Search of Deep Semiotic Structures: The Genesis of *Das Schloß.*' *Language and Style*, 19 (1986), 315-24.

Effe, Bernd. 'Sokrates in Venedig. Thomas Mann und die »platonische Liebe«.' *Antike und Abendland*, 31 (1985), 153-66.

Eggenschwiler, David. 'The Very Glance of Art: Ironic Narrative in Mann's *Novellen.*' *Modern Language Quarterly*, 48 (1987), 59-85.

Emrich, Elke. 'Zum metaphysischen Bedürfnis in Thomas Manns *Buddenbrooks* und Heinrich Manns *Im Schlaraffenland.*' In *Annäherungen: Studien zur deutschen Literatur und Literaturwissenschaft im 20. Jahrhundert.* Ed. Hans Ester and Guillaume van Genert. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1985, pp. 19-33.

Emrich, Wilhelm. *Franz Kafka: A Critical Study of his Writings*. Trans. Sheema Zeben Buehne. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1968.

Eschweiler, Christian. *Kafkas Erzählungen und ihr verborgener Hintergrund*. Bonn: Bouvier, 1991.

Evans, Tamara S. '«Ich werde Besseres machen...»: Zu Thomas Manns Goethe-Nachfolge in *Tonio Kröger*.' *Colloquia Germanica*, 15 (1982), 84-97.

Ezergailis, Inta Miske. *Male and Female: An Approach to Thomas Mann's Dialectic*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975.

Fernández Bañuls, Juan Alberto. 'Bécquer y la creación del 27: el caso de Cernuda.' *Archivo Hispalense*, 54, No. 165 (1971), 40-76.

Feuerlicht, Ignace. 'Thomas Mann and Homoeroticism.' *Germanic Review*, 57 (1982), 89-97.

Fiedler, Leonhard M. 'Zwischen »Wahrheit« und »Methode«. Kafka-Rede in Mainz.' *Neue Rundschau*, 94, No. 4 (1983), 184-204.

Flores, Angel, ed. *The Kafka Debate: New Perspectives for our Time*. New York: Gordian Press, 1977.

Freedman, Ralph. 'Kafka's Obscurity: The Illusion of Logic in Narrative.' *Modern Fiction Studies*, 8 (1962), 61-74.

Frentzel Beyme, Susana. 'La función del cuerpo en la cosmovisión poética de Luis Cernuda.' *Cuadernos del Sur*, 10 (1969), 93-101.

Frizen, Werner. *Zaubertrank der Metaphysik: Quellenkritische Überlegungen im Umkreis der Schopenhauer-Rezeption Thomas Manns*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1980.

García-Devesa, Consuelo. 'Cuatro poemas de amor o un poema de Luis Cernuda a la luz de Bécquer, Rosalía y A. Machado.' *Romance Notes*, 33 (1992), 197-206.

Gariano, Carmelo. 'Aspectos clásicos de la poesía de Luis Cernuda.' *Hispania*, 48 (1965), 234-46.

Geiser, Christoph. *Naturalismus und Symbolismus im Frühwerk Thomas Manns*. Bern: Francke, 1971.

Ghanadan, Gholam Reza. 'Kafka: The De-alienated Artist.' Thesis Lancaster 1976.

Gil de Biedma, Jaime, Juan Gil Albert and Luis Antonio de Villena. *3 Luis Cernuda*. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1977.

Glicksberg, Charles I. *The Tragic Vision in Twentieth Century Literature*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963.

Goebel, Rolf J. 'Kafka and Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*: Critique and Revision.' *Journal of the Kafka Society of America*, 9 (1985), 69-82.

Goll, Klaus Rainer. 'Der Mensch der Decadence. Zum Motiv des Außenseiters im Frühwerk Thomas Manns.' *Hefte der deutschen Thomas-Mann-Gesellschaft*, 1 (1981), 15-23.

Golomb, Jacob. 'Kafka's Existential Metamorphosis: From Kierkegaard to Nietzsche and Beyond.' *Clio*, 14 (1985), 271-86.

Goozé, Marjanne E. 'Texts, Textuality, and Silence in Franz Kafka's *Das Schloß*.' *Modern Language Notes*, 98 (1983), 337-50.

Grawe, Christian. '»Eine Art von höherem Abschreiben.« Zum »Typhus«-Kapitel in Thomas Manns *Buddenbrooks*.' *Thomas Mann Jahrbuch*, 5 (1992), 115-24.

Gray, Richard T. 'Suggestive Metaphor: Kafka's Aphorisms and the Crisis of Communication.' *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 58 (1984), 454-69.

Gray, Ronald. *Franz Kafka*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

———. *Kafka's Castle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956.

Greenberg, Martin. *The Terror of Art: Kafka and Modern Literature*. London: André Deutsch, 1971.

Grimes, Margaret. 'Kafka's Use of Cue-Names: Its Importance for an Interpretation of *The Castle*.' *Centennial Review*, 18 (1974), 221-30.

Gross, Ruth V., ed. *Critical Essays on Franz Kafka*. Boston, Massachusetts: G. K. Hall, 1990.

Häfele, Josef, and Hans Stammel. *Thomas Mann: Der Tod in Venedig*. Frankfurt am Main: Moritz Diesterweg, 1992.

Hall, Calvin S., and Richard E. Lind. *Dreams, Life and Literature: A Study of Franz Kafka*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970.

Härle, Gerhard. *Männerweiblichkeit: Zur Homosexualität bei Klaus und Thomas Mann*. 2nd ed. Frankfurt am Main: Anton Hain, 1993.

Harris, Derek. 'A Primitive Version of Luis Cernuda's Elegy on the Death of Lorca.' *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 50 (1973), 357-73.

———. 'Ejemplo de fidelidad poética: El superrealismo de Luis Cernuda.' *La Caña Gris*, Nos. 6-8 (Otoño de 1962), 102-8.

———. 'La escritura surrealista de *Un río, un amor*, de Luis Cernuda.' *Ínsula*, Año 44, No. 515 (1989), 15-17.

———, ed. *Luis Cernuda*. Madrid: Taurus, 1977.

———. *Luis Cernuda: A Study of the Poetry*. London: Tamesis, 1973.

Harter, Deborah. 'The Artist on Trial: Kafka and Josefine, "die Sängerin".' *Deutsche*

Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, 61 (1987), 151-62.

Hayes, Tom, and Lee Quinby. 'The Aporia of Bourgeois Art: Desire in Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*.' *Criticism*, 31 (1989), 159-77.

Heidsieck, Arnold. 'Kafka's Narrative Ontology.' *Philosophy and Literature*, 11 (1987), 242-57.

Heller, Erich. *Kafka*. London: Fontana, 1974.

———. *Thomas Mann: The Ironic German*. Rev. ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Heller, Peter. 'Der *Tod in Venedig* und Thomas Manns *Grund-Motiv*.' In *Thomas Mann: Ein Kolloquium*. Ed. H. Schalte and G. Chapple. Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1978, pp. 35-83.

Hellersberg-Wendriner, Anna. *Mystik der Gottesferne: Eine Interpretation Thomas Manns*. Bern: Francke, 1960.

Hibberd, John. *Kafka: 'Die Verwandlung'*. London: Grant and Cutler, 1985.

Hillmann, Heinz. *Franz Kafka: Dichtungstheorie und Dichtungsgestalt*. Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1964.

Hirschbach, Frank Donald. *The Arrow and the Lyre: A Study of the Rôle of Love in the Works of Thomas Mann*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955.

Hirst, Ann E. 'Literary Decadence in the Early Works of André Gide and Thomas Mann, with a Consideration of their Later Relationship.' Thesis Oxford 1982.

Hoffman, Anne Golumb. 'Plotting the Landscape: Stories and Storytellers in *The Castle*.' *Twentieth Century Literature*, 27 (1981), 289-307.

Hoffmann, Martina. *Thomas Manns* Der Tod in Venedig: *Eine Entwicklungsgeschichte im Spiegel philosophischer Konzeptionen*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1995.

Hoffmann, Werner. *«Ansturm gegen die letzte irdische Grenze.» Aphorismen und Spätwerk Kafkas*. Bern: Francke, 1984.

———. *Kafkas Aphorismen*. Bern: Francke, 1975.

Hollingdale, R. J. *Thomas Mann: A Critical Study*. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1971.

Honegger, Jürg Beat. *Das Phänomen der Angst bei Franz Kafka*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1975.

Höpfner, Felix. 'Goethes *Werther* — auch ein Modell der *Buddenbrooks*? Sowie einige Bemerkungen über Originalität und Thomas Manns Verhältnis zu den Quellen.' *Orbis Litterarum*, 51 (1996), 26-43.

Hughes, Brian. 'Cernuda and the Poetic Imagination: *Primeras Poesías* as Metaphysical Poetry.' *Anales de Literatura Española*, 1 (1982), 317-31.

——— *Luis Cernuda and the Modern English Poets: A Study of the Influence of Browning, Yeats and Eliot on his Poetry.* Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, 1987.

Ibáñez Avendaño, Begoña. 'El aire, el agua, el muro y el acorde como génesis literaria de *La realidad y el deseo.*' *Letras de Deusto*, 55 (1992), 91-104.

Janouch, Gustav. *Gespräche mit Kafka: Aufzeichnungen und Erinnerungen.* Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1968.

Jiménez-Fajardo, Salvador. *Luis Cernuda.* Boston: Twayne, 1978.

———, ed. *The Word and the Mirror: Critical Essays on the Poetry of Luis Cernuda.* Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1989.

Jung, Ute. *Die Musikphilosophie Thomas Manns.* Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1969.

Kaufmann, Fritz. *Thomas Mann: The World as Will and Representation.* New York: Cooper Square, 1973.

Kessler, Susanne. *Kafka — Poetik der sinnlichen Welt.* Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1983.

Kim, Jeong-Suk. *Franz Kafka: Darstellung und Funktion des Raumes in »Der Prozeß« und »Das Schloß«.* Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1983.

Kimball, Susanne. 'Thomas Mann's Protagonists and the Problem of Eros.' *Germanic Notes*, 19 (1989), 49-57.

Kirchberger, Lida. *Franz Kafka's Use of Law in Fiction: A New Interpretation of* In der Strafkolonie, Der Prozess, *and* Das Schloss. New York: Lang, 1986.

Kirchhoff, Ursula. *Die Darstellung des Festes im Roman um 1900: Ihre thematische und funktionale Bedeutung.* Münster: Aschendorff, 1969.

Ki-Sang, Han. 'Physiognomik als technisches Darstellungsmittel im Werk Thomas Manns. Vom Naturalistisch-Realistischen bis zum Mythisch-Utopischen.' Thesis Universität Gießen 1980.

Kittler, Wolf. 'Die Klauen der Sirenen.' *Modern Language Notes*, 108 (1993), 500-16.

Klawiter, Randolph J. 'The Artist-Intellectual, in or versus Society? A Dilemma.' In *Studies in German Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Festschrift for Frederic E. Coehnen.* Ed. Siegfried Mews. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970, pp. 236-50.

Kobs, Jörgen. *Kafka: Untersuchungen zu Bewußtsein und Sprache seiner Gestalten.* Ed. Ursula Brech. Bad Homburg: Athenäum, 1970.

Koopmann, Helmut. *Die Entwicklung des »intellektualen Romans« bei Thomas Mann: Untersuchungen zur Struktur von »Buddenbrooks«, »Königliche Hoheit« und »Der Zauberberg«.* 3rd ed. Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1980.

———. 'Warnung vor Wirklichem: Zum Realismus bei Thomas Mann.' In *Wegbereiter der Moderne: Studien zu Schnitzler, Hauptmann, Thomas Mann, Hesse, Kaiser, Traven, Kafka, Broch, von Unruh und Brecht. Festschrift für Klaus Jonas.* Ed. Helmut Koopmann and Clark Muenzer. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990, pp. 68-87.

Koppen, Erwin. *Dekadenter Wagnerismus: Studien zur europäischen Literatur des Fin de siècle.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973.

Kraft, Herbert. *Someone like K.: Kafka's Novels.* Trans. R. Kavanagh. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1991.

Kremer, Detlef. 'Die Identität der Schrift: Flaubert und Kafka.' *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 63 (1989), 547-73.

Kuna, Franz. *Kafka: Literature as Corrective Punishment.* London: Elek Books, 1974.

Küng, Hans. 'Religion im Zusammenbruch der Moderne.' In *Dichtung und Religion: Pascal, Gryphius, Lessing, Hölderlin, Novalis, Kierkegaard, Dostojewski, Kafka.* Ed. Walter Jens and Hans Küng. München: Kindler, 1985, pp. 286-305.

Lämmert, Eberhard. 'Doppelte Optik: Über die Erzählkunst des frühen Thomas Mann.' In *Literatur. Sprache. Gesellschaft.* Ed. Karl Rüdinger. München: Bayerischer Schulbuchverlag, 1970, pp. 50-72.

Ledford, Lorraine. 'Cernuda's *demonio*: Devil or Divinity?' In *Essays in Honor of Jorge Guillén on the Occasion of his 85th Year.* No ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Abedul, 1977, pp. 42-51.

Lehnert, Herbert. 'Thomas Mann: *Buddenbrooks* (1901)'. In *Deutsche Romane des 20. Jahrhunderts: Neue Interpretationen.* Ed. Paul Michael Lützeler. Königstein/Ts: Athenäum, 1983, pp. 31-49.

———. *Thomas Mann: Fiktion, Mythos, Religion.* Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1965.

López Castro, Armando. 'Ética y poesía en Cernuda.' *Cuadernos para investigación de la literatura hispánica*, 8 (1987), 75-105.

Lubich, Frederick Alfred. *Die Dialektik von Logos und Eros im Werk von Thomas Mann.* Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1986.

Lubkoll, Christine. 'Dies ist kein Pfeifen: Musik und Negation in Franz Kafkas Erzählung *Josefine, die Sängerin oder Das Volk der Mäuse.*' *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 66 (1992), 748-64.

Ludmann, Olaf. 'Einige Gedanken zum Thema »Goethe als literarische Gestalt.« Zu Thomas Manns »Lotte in Weimar«.' *Goethe Jahrbuch*, 97 (1980), 132-9.

Lungstrum, Janet. 'Self-Constructs of Impermanence: Kafka, Nietzsche and Creativity.' *Seminar*, 27 (1991), 102-20.

McMullan, Terence. 'Luis Cernuda and the Emerging Influence of Pierre Reverdy.' *Revue de littérature comparée*, 49 (1975), 129-50.

McWilliams, James R. *Brother Artist: A Psychological Study of Thomas Mann's Fiction.* Lanham: University Press of America, 1983.

Maché, Britta. 'The Bürstner Affair and its Significance for the Courtroom Scenes and the End of Kafka's *Prozeß.*' *German Quarterly*, 65 (1992), 18-34.

Mandrell, James. 'Cernuda's "El indolente": Repetition, Doubling, and the Construction of Poetic Voice.' *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 65 (1988), 383-95.

Maristany, Luis. *La realidad y el deseo. Luis Cernuda.* Barcelona: Laia, 1982.

Marson, Eric L. *The Ascetic Artist: Prefigurations in Thomas Mann's 'Der Tod in Venedig'.* Bern: Lang, 1979.

Martínez, David. 'Luis Cernuda, poeta existencial.' *Revista de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba*, 5 (1964), 143-70.

Martínez Cuitiño, Luis. 'El reflejo del mundo en la obra de Luis Cernuda.' *Revista de literatura*, 45 (1983), 127-48.

May, Keith M. *Nietzsche and Modern Literature: Themes in Yeats, Rilke, Mann and Lawrence.* Houndmills: Macmillan, 1988.

Milfull, Helen. 'The Theological Position of Franz Kafka's Aphorisms.' *Seminar*, 18 (1982), 168-83.

Milman, Yoseph. 'The Ambiguous Point of View and Reader Involvement in Kafka: A Reader Oriented Approach to *The Castle* and "In the Penal Colony".' *Neophilologus*, 77 (1993), 261-72.

Mittenzwei, Johannes. *Das Musikalische in der Literatur: Ein Überblick von Gottfried von Straßburg bis Brecht.* Halle: VEB Verlag Sprache und Literatur, 1962.

Möbus, Frank. 'Theoderich, Julia und die Jakobsleiter: Franz Kafkas Erzählfragmente zum *Jäger Gracchus.*' *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 109 (1990), 253-71.

Montoro, Adrian G. 'Rebeldía de Cernuda.' *Sin Nombre*, 6, No. 4 (1976), 19-30.

Moulden, Ken, and Gero von Wilpert, eds. *'Buddenbrooks'-Handbuch.* Stuttgart: Kröner, 1988.

Mueller, Thomas. 'Aspekte des Spiels bei Kafka.' *Seminar*, 24 (1988), 20-30.

Müller, Elisabeth. *Die Dichtung Luis Cernudas.* Genève: Romanisches Seminar der Universität Köln, 1962.

Müller, Fred. *Thomas Mann: »Buddenbrooks«.* München: Oldenbourg, 1979.

Murphy, Richard. 'Semiotic Excess, Semantic Vacuity and the Photograph of the Imaginary: The Interplay of Realism and the Fantastic in Kafka's *Die Verwandlung.*' *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 65 (1991), 304-17.

Mykyta, Larysa. 'Woman as Obstacle and the Way.' *Modern Language Notes*, 90 (1980), 627-40.

Nachman, Larry David, and Albert S. Braverman. 'Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*: Bourgeois Society and the Inner Life.' *Germanic Review*, 44 (1970), 201-25.

Nagel, Bert. *Kafka und die Weltliteratur: Zusammenhänge und Wechselwirkungen.* München: Winkler, 1983.

Newman, Richard K. '«Primeras Poesías». 1924-27.' *La Caña Gris*, Nos. 6-8 (Otoño de 1962), 84-99.

Newman, Robert K. 'Luis Cernuda: El hombre visto a través de su poesía.' *Ínsula*, Año 19, No. 207 (1964), 6 & 13.

Nicholls, Roger A. *Nietzsche in the Early Work of Thomas Mann.* Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955.

Nield, Brian Whittaker. 'Surrealism in Spain, with Special Reference to the Poetry of Alberti, Aleixandre, Cernuda and Lorca, 1928-1931.' Thesis Cambridge 1971.

Northcote-Bade, James. *Die Wagner-Mythen im Frühwerk Thomas Manns.* Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1975.

— — —. 'The Background to the "Liebestod" Plot Pattern in the Works of Thomas Mann.' *Germanic Review*, 59 (1984), 11-18.

Nündel, Ernst. *Die Kunsttheorie Thomas Manns.* Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1972.

Nutting, Peter West. 'Kafka's "Strahlende Heiterkeit": Discursive Humor and Comic Narration in *Das Schloß*.' *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 57 (1983), 651-78.

Olivio Jiménez, José. 'Emoción y trascendencia del tiempo en la poesía de Luis Cernuda.' *La Caña Gris*, Nos. 6-8 (Otoño de 1962), 45-83.

Onís, Carlos Marcial de. *El surrealismo y cuatro poetas de la generación del 27.* Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas, 1974.

Ortiz, Fernando. 'T. S. Eliot en Cernuda.' *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, No. 416 (1985), 95-104.

Otto, Susanne. *Literarische Produktion als egozentrische Variation des Problems von Identitätsfindung und -stabilisierung: Ursprung, Grundlagen und Konsequenzen bei Thomas Mann. Analyse des novellistischen Frühwerks mit Perspektive auf das Gesamtwerk.* Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1982.

Pascal, Roy. *Kafka's Narrators: A Study of his Stories and Sketches.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Pato, Hilda. 'El «tú» (y el «otro») en la poesía de Luis Cernuda.' *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 11 (1986), 225-35.

———. *Los finales poemáticos en la obra de Luis Cernuda.* Boulder, Colorado: Society of Spanish and Spanish-American Studies, 1988.

Paz, Octavio. 'La palabra edificante.' In *Cuadrivio.* 2nd ed. México: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, 1969, pp. 165-203.

Petr, Pavel. *Kafkas Spiele: Selbststilisierung und literarische Komik.* Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1992.

Philipson, Wendy. 'The Part Played by Evil in the Works of Thomas Mann.' Thesis London 1973.

Platzer, Hildegard. 'Sex, Marriage and Guilt: The Dilemma of Mating in Kafka.' *Mosaic,* 3 (1970), 119-30.

Politzer, Heinz. *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962.

———. 'Franz Kafka's Language.' *Modern Fiction Studies,* 8 (1962), 16-22.

———. 'The Alienated Self — A Key to Franz Kafka's *Castle*?' *Michigan Quarterly Review,* 14 (1975), 398-414.

Pongs, Hermann. *Franz Kafka: Dichter des Labyrinths.* Heidelberg: Wolfgang Rothe, 1960.

Pütz, Peter. 'Der Ausbruch aus der Negativität: Das Ethos im *Tod in Venedig.*' *Thomas Mann Jahrbuch,* 1 (1988), 1-11.

———. *Kunst und Künstlerexistenz bei Nietzsche und Thomas Mann: Zum Problem des ästhetischen Perspektivismus in der Moderne.* 2nd ed. Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1975.

———, ed. *Thomas Mann und die Tradition.* Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1971.

Quirarte, Vicente. *La poética del hombre dividido en la obra de Luis Cernuda.* México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1985.

Rajec, Elizabeth M. *Namen und ihre Bedeutungen im Werk Franz Kafkas: Ein interpretatorischer Versuch.* Bern: Lang, 1977.

Real Ramos, César. 'La raíz de *la diferencia* de Luis Cernuda: La visión mítica de la realidad.' *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea,* 15 (1990), 109-27.

———. *Luis Cernuda y la 'Generación del 27'.* Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1983.

Reed, T. J. *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.

Reiß, Günter. *»Allegorisierung« und moderne Erzählkunst: Eine Studie zum Werk Thomas Manns.* München: Wilhelm Fink, 1970.

Resina, Juan Ramón. 'La realidad y el deseo en la poesía de Luis Cernuda.' *Hora de Poesía*, 29 (1983), 72-83.

Ridley, Hugh. *Mann: 'Buddenbrooks'*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Ries, Wiebrecht. 'Kafka und Nietzsche.' *Nietzsche-Studien*, 2 (1973), 258-75.

Robert, Marthe. *Einsam wie Franz Kafka*. Trans. Eva Michel-Moldenhauer. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987.

Robertson, Ritchie. 'Kafka's Zürau Aphorisms.' *Oxford German Studies*, 14 (1983), 73-91.

Rockwood, Heidi M., and Robert J. R. Rockwood. 'The Psychological Reality of Myth in *Der Tod in Venedig*.' *Germanic Review*, 59 (1984), 137-41.

Romero, Francisco. 'El muro y la ventana: La "otredad" de Luis Cernuda.' *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, No. 396 (1983), 545-75.

Rosenthal, Dieter. 'Überlegungen zur strukturalen Analyse von Prosatexten mit einem Vergleich zwischen Thomas Manns "Buddenbrooks" und Heinrich Bölls "Billard um halbzehn".' *Germanica Wratislaviensia*, 40 (1980), 27-43.

Rudolph, Andrea. *Zum Modernitätsproblem in ausgewählten Erzählungen Thomas Manns*. Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, Akademischer Verlag Stuttgart, 1991.

Ruiz, Mario E. 'La angustia como origen de *la realidad* y manifestación *del deseo* en Luis Cernuda.' *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, 5 (1971), 349-62.

Ruiz Silva, José Carlos. *Arte, amor y otras soledades en Luis Cernuda*. Madrid: De la Torre, 1979.

— — —. 'En torno a un poema de Luis Cernuda: "Mozart".' *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, No. 316 (1976), 61-5.

— — —. 'La música en la obra de Luis Cernuda.' *Revista de literatura*, 39 (1978), 53-98.

Ruiz Soriano, Francisco. 'Ejemplos coincidentes de los tópicos de "la ciudad estéril" y "los hombres vacios" en T. S. Eliot, Luis Cernuda y Rafael Alberti.' *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 18 (1993), 295-308.

Sánchez Rosillo, Eloy. *La fuerza del destino: Vida y poesía de Luis Cernuda*. Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 1992.

Schubiger, Jürg. *Franz Kafka: Die Verwandlung. Eine Interpretation*. Zürich: Atlantis, 1969.

Schulz, Christiane. *Der Schreibprozeß bei Thomas Mann und Franz Kafka und seine didaktischen Implikationen*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1985.

Schumacher, Paul J. 'Transcendence in Kafka's *Castle*: An Existential View.' *Midwest Quarterly*, 32 (1991), 388-406.

Schur, David M. 'Kafka's Way of Transcendence.' *Seminar*, 30 (1994), 395-408.

Seiler, Bernd W. 'Ironischer Stil und realistischer Eindruck. Zu einem scheinbaren Widerspruch in der Erzählkunst Thomas Manns.' *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 60 (1986), 459-83.

Sheppard, Richard. *On Kafka's Castle: A Study.* London: Croom Helm, 1973.

— — —. 'Realism plus Mythology: A Reconsideration of the Problem of "Verfall" in Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*', *Modern Language Review*, 89 (1994), 916-41.

Silver, Philip W. 'Cernuda and Spanish Romanticism: Prolegonena to a Genealogy.' *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 43 (1990), 107-13.

— — —. *De la mano de Cernuda: Invitación a la poesía.* Madrid: Cátedra, 1989.

— — —. *Et in Arcadia Ego: A Study of the Poetry of Luis Cernuda.* London: Tamesis, 1965.

Sokel, Walter H. *Franz Kafka: Tragik und Ironie.* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1976.

— — —. *The Writer in Extremis: Expressionism in Twentieth Century Literature.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959.

Sommerhage, Claus. *Eros und Poesis: Über das Erotische im Werk Thomas Manns.* Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1982.

Soufas, Charles Christopher, Jr. 'Agents of Power in the Poetry of Luis Cernuda.' Diss. Duke 1979.

— — —. 'Cernuda and Daimonic Power.' *Hispania*, 66 (1983), 167-75.

— — —. *Conflict of Light and Wind: The Spanish Generation of 1927 and the Ideology of Poetic Form.* Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1989.

— — —. '«Et in Arcadia Ego»: Luis Cernuda, Ekphrasis, and the Reader.' *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 7 (1982), 97-107.

— — —. 'Ideologizing Form: Anti-Mimetic Language Theories in the Early Poetry of Jorge Guillén and Luis Cernuda.' *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 16 (1991), 101-17.

Spann, Meno. *Franz Kafka.* London: George Prior, 1976.

Speirs, Ronald. 'Where there's a Will there's no Way. A Reading of Kafka's *Der Jäger Gracchus.*' *Oxford German Studies*, 14 (1983), 92-110.

Stach, Reiner. *Kafkas erotischer Mythos: Eine ästhetische Konstruktion des Weiblichen.* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987.

Sussman, Henry. *Franz Kafka: Geometrician of Metaphor.* Madison: Coda Press, 1979.

Swales, Martin. *'Buddenbrooks': Family Life as the Mirror of Social Change.* Boston:

Twayne, 1991.

———. 'Symbolic Patterns or Realistic Plenty? Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* and the European Novel.' *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 60 (1989-90), 80-95.

———. *Thomas Mann: A Study*. London: Heinemann, 1980.

Talens, Jenaro. *El espacio y las máscaras: Introducción a la lectura de Cernuda*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 1975.

Thomas, R. Hinton. *Thomas Mann: The Mediation of Art*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956.

Travers, Martin. *Thomas Mann*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1992.

Tuska, Jon. 'Thomas Mann and Nietzsche: A Study in his Ideas.' *Germanic Review*, 39 (1964), 281-99.

Uceda, Julia. 'La patria más profunda.' *Ínsula*, Año 19, No. 207 (1964), 8.

Ulacia, Manuel. *Luis Cernuda: Escritura, cuerpo y deseo*. Barcelona: Laia, 1986.

Unseld, Joachim. *Franz Kafka: Ein Schriftstellerleben. Die Geschichte seiner Veröffentlichungen*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1984.

Utrera, María Victoria. 'La estructura temporal de *La realidad y el deseo* en *Como quien espera el alba*.' *Archivo Hispalense*, 74 (1991), 119-45.

Valender, James. *Cernuda y el poema en prosa*. London: Tamesis, 1984.

———. 'Cernuda y sus "Poemas para un cuerpo".' *Revista de la Universidad de México*, 38, No. 15 (1982), 30-37.

———. 'Cuatro Cartas de Luis Cernuda a Juan Guerrero (1928-1929).' *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, No. 316 (1976), 45-53.

———, ed. *Luis Cernuda ante la crítica mexicana*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990.

Vitzthum, Thomas. 'A Revolution in Writing: The Overthrow of Epic Storytelling by Written Narrative in Kafka's *Josefine, die Sängerin*.' *Symposium*, 46 (1993), 269-78.

Vogl, Joseph. 'Vierte Person. Kafkas Erzählstimme.' *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 68 (1994), 745-56.

Vogt, Jochen. *Thomas Mann: »Buddenbrooks«*. München: Wilhelm Fink, 1983.

Von Abrams, Karin Lynne. 'The Idea of "Character" as a Structuring Principle in Kafka's Shorter Fiction.' Thesis London 1983.

Weiner, Marc A. 'Silence, Sound, and Song in *Der Tod in Venedig*: A Study in Psycho-Social Repression.' *Seminar*, 23 (1987), 137-55.

Weiß, Walter. *Thomas Manns Kunst der sprachlichen und thematischen Integration*.

Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1964.

Wiecker, Rolf, ed. *Gedenkschrift für Thomas Mann. 1875-1975.* Kopenhagen: Verlag Text und Kontext, 1975.

Wilson, Edward M. 'Cernuda's Debts.' In *Studies in Modern Spanish Literature and Art Presented to Helen F. Grant.* Ed. Nigel Glendinning. London: Tamesis, 1972, pp. 239-53.

Wolf, Ernest M. *Magnum Opus: Studies in the Narrative Fiction of Thomas Mann.* New York: Lang, 1989.

Wysling, Hans. '*Buddenbrooks.*' In his *Ausgewählte Aufsätze 1963-1995.* Ed. Thomas Sprecher and Cornelia Bernini. Vol. XIII of *Thomas-Mann-Studien.* Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996, pp. 197-217.

— — —. 'Schopenhauer-Leser Thomas Mann.' *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch*, 64 (1983), 61-79.

— — —, ed. *Thomas Mann. Selbstkommentare: »Buddenbrooks«.* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1990.

Zardoya, Concha. 'Imagen de España en la poesía de Luis Cernuda.' *Sin Nombre*, 6, No. 4 (1976), 31-41.

Zeller, Rosmarie. 'Advokatenkniffe: Die Thematisierung von Textproduktion und Interpretation im Werk Kafkas.' *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 106 (1987), 558-76.

Tertiary Literature

Aldana, Francisco de. *Poesías castellanas completas.* Ed. José Lara Garrido. Madrid: Cátedra, 1985.

Aleixandre, Vicente. *Obras completas.* Madrid: Aguilar, 1968.

Allen, R. E., ed. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English.* 8th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Anderson, Andrew A. *Lorca's Late Poetry: A Critical Study.* Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990.

Bécquer, Gustavo Adolfo. *Rimas.* Ed. José Luis Cano. Madrid: Cátedra, 1983.

Bloom, Harold. *A Map of Misreading.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Cardwell, Richard A. '*Don Álvaro* or the Force of Cosmic Injustice.' *Studies in Romanticism*, 12 (1973), 559-79.

Castro, Rosalía de. *En las orillas del Sar.* Ed. Marina Mayoral. 3rd ed. Madrid: Castalia, 1989.

Eckermann, Johann Peter. *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens.* 2 Vols. Ed. Fritz Bergmann. Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1981.

Eco, Umberto. 'Overinterpreting Texts.' In *Interpretation and Overinterpretation.* Ed. Stefan Collini. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 45-66.

García Lorca, Federico. *Selected Poems.* Ed. and trans. Merryn Williams. Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1992.

García-Pelayo y Gross, Ramón, ed. *Larousse Diccionario de la lengua española.* Barcelona: Ediciones Larousse, 1987.

Gardiner, Patrick. *Kierkegaard.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Guillén, Jorge. *Cántico.* 2nd ed. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1984.

Hannay, Alastair. *Kierkegaard.* London: Routledge, 1991.

Heine, Heinrich. *Buch der Lieder.* München: Goldmann, 1987.

Hölderlin, Friedrich. *Selected Verse.* Ed. and trans. Michael Hamburger. London: Anvil Press Poetry, 1986.

Howatson, Margaret C., and Ian Chilvers, eds. *The Concise Oxford Companion to Classical Literature.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Janaway, Christopher. *Schopenhauer.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Kierkegaard, Søren. *Kierkegaard's Writings.* 25 Vols. Ed. and trans. H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.

Kleist, Heinrich von. *Werke in einem Band.* Ed. Helmut Sembdner. München: Carl Hanser, 1966.

Lodge, David, ed. *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader.* London: Longman, 1988.

McCabe, Mary Margaret. *Plato's Individuals.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Machado, Antonio. *Poesías completas.* Ed. Manuel Alvar. 17th ed. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1993.

Morris, C. B. *Surrealism and Spain 1920-1936.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Werke in drei Bänden.* Ed. Karl Schlechta. München: Carl Hanser, 1954-6.

Paglia, Camille. *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson.* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992.

Plato. *Phaedrus and the Seventh and Eighth Letters.* Trans. Walter Hamilton. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973.

———. *The Symposium.* Trans. Walter Hamilton. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951.

Pütz, Peter. *Friedrich Nietzsche.* Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1967.

Rivas, Duque de. *Don Álvaro o la fuerza del sino.* Ed. Donald L. Shaw. Madrid: Castalia, 1986.

———. *Romances.* 8th ed. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1976.

Rivers, Elias L., ed. *Poesía lírica del siglo de oro.* 7th ed. Madrid: Cátedra, 1985.

Salzberger, L. S. *Hölderlin.* Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1952.

San Juan de la Cruz. *Poesía.* Ed. Domingo Ynduráin. 4th ed. Madrid: Cátedra, 1988.

———. *Poesías completas y otras páginas.* Zaragoza: Ebro, 1961.

Schiller, Friedrich. *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung.* Stuttgart: Reclam, 1978.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Sämtliche Werke.* 7 Vols. Wiesbaden: Eberhard Brockhaus, 1949.

Simpson, J. M. Y. *A First Course in Linguistics.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1979.

Steiner, George. *Real Presences: Is There Anything in What We Say?* London: Faber and Faber, 1989.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984.

Unamuno, Miguel de. *Niebla.* 18th ed. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1980.

Wahrig, Gerhard, ed. *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. Rev. ed. München: Mosaik, 1986.

Walters, D. Gareth. 'The Saint as Romantic Hero: An Interpretation of Rivas' *El solemne desengaño*.' In *A Face Not Turned to the Wall: Essays on Hispanic Themes for Gareth Alban Davies*. Ed. C. A. Longhurst. Leeds: University of Leeds Department of Spanish and Portuguese, 1987, pp. 137-57.

Weininger, Otto. *Geschlecht und Charakter: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung*. 22nd ed. Wien: Braumüller, 1921.

GLASGOW
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY